

Anglistische Forschungen

Herausgegeben von Dr. JOHANNES HOOPS

Professor an der Universität Heidelberg

~~~~~ Heft 7 ~~~~~

## The Comparison of Adjectives

in English

in the XV and the XVI Century

by

Louise Pound



G. E. G. R. 1822

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Preface.

The following dissertation deals with the comparison of adjectives in English in the middle period of development. The fifteenth and the sixteenth century represent the transition from Middle to New English, when forms and spellings are being fixed, and the fate of many new constructions determined. A systematic survey of the morphological and syntactical facts connected with the history of adjective comparison in these centuries is necessary to a complete history of adjective comparison in English, a history which may well be worked out century by century. Further, such inquiry should help to fix chronologically the shifts of meaning in certain irregular or anomalous comparatives and superlatives, and the development of certain new forms.

Throughout, two things have been kept steadily in mind, the relation of the forms and constructions discussed to those in preceding centuries, to Old English and Middle English, and, second, their relation to the forms and constructions found in Shakespeare and later English. Shakespeare, coming at the close of the sixteenth century, marks the *terminus ad quem* of the period here treated. Frequent reference is made in the following to Franz's Shakespeare-Grammatik, a book which is indispensable to the student of Elizabethan English.

One of the most interesting questions connected with the history of the comparison of adjectives in English is that which concerns the origin of the «French», or periphrastic, method of comparison. This falls in the earlier period, the period before 1400, which it was my purpose to treat also, but which will be treated in a separate dissertation, now in preparation, by Mr. Aloys Mayer, Cand. Phil. Heidelberg.

With regard to the method of presentation, fullness though not of course completeness of illustration has been the aim. In an inquiry of such nature as the following, right conclusions must rest largely on the number and the variety of examples cited. For this reason, what may seem, perhaps, an unnecessary number of texts has been examined. Dialect differences, authors' peculiarities, variations between literary and colloquial usage, — conclusions on these points, for earlier centuries as for modern times, are to be reached only after the examination of a large number of texts. Hence, also, the texts examined cover a wide range in theme and form. Such publications as the Paston Letters and the Elizabethan Diaries are valuable, for certain purposes, especially because not prepared for print. For colloquial language and dialect, passages in some of the later plays, as in Greene and Peele, and many of the Dodsley-Hazlitt series, are useful. In literary usage, sermons, controversial writings, historical narratives, poems, dramas, and so on, may be distinguished. Examples from all these classes will be found in the list of texts examined.

Whenever possible, reprints, like the Arber series, and critical texts have been consulted, instead of «modernized» versions. To cite an example showing the importance

of this, even in relatively late texts, compare the *gentleest* of Yeowell's modernized edition of Surrey's poems with the *gentillest* of the same poem in Tottel's Miscellany. The necessity for critical texts would have been still greater, had the purpose been to deal chiefly with orthography and phonology, rather than morphology and syntax.

In conclusion, the author wishes to express appreciation and a strong sense of indebtedness to Prof. Dr. Johannes Hoops of the University of Heidelberg. The investigation which follows was made at his inspiration, and whatever it may contain of value is probably due to his stimulus and kind advice.

Heidelberg 1900.

Louise Pound.

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Introduction.

The Comparison of Adjectives in Old and Middle English §§ 1—2. Rise of the Periphrastic Method. The Names «Terminational» and «Periphrastic» §§ 3—4. Distinctions in Usage. History of Critical Opinion § 5. Modern Rules § 6. Some Special Uses of Terminational Comparison § 7. Conclusions for Modern English § 8. Comparison in the XV and the XVI Century § 9. Adjective Vocabulary in the XV and the XVI Century § 10.

§ 1. Old English, like all Teutonic languages, shows organic or terminational comparison. The comparative degree is formed by the addition of the suffix *-ra*, and the superlative by the addition of the suffix *-ost* (*-ust*, *-ast*, *-est*) to the positive, representing the Teutonic **-ōzan-*, **-ōsta-*, **-izan-*, **-ista-*. Traces of the latter endings are seen in a few unlauted forms of adjectives in frequent use, like *ieldra*, *grietra*, *gingra*, *lengest*, *strengest*, *sciertest*, *hiehest*. Irregularly compared adjectives are *god*, *yfel*, *micel*, and *lytel*. Beside these are a few superlatives with an *-m* suffix, Teutonic **-uma*, Indo-European *-amo* (*-mmo*, *-mo*). Compare Latin *optimus*, *pessimus*, etc. This appears as *-ma* in *forma*; *hindema*, or as *-mest*, the superlative ending *-est* being, added, in *sidemest*, *midmest*, etc. For full particulars cf. Sievers § 307—315, or Kaluza § 140.

§ 2. In late Old English and in Middle English, by the weakening of final vowels in inflectional syllables the comparative endings become *-re*, and *-est*. The modern *-er* is developed from *-re* by loss of the final vowel

the resulting syllabic *r* being written *-er*. By Chaucer's time, the modern comparison by *-er* and *-est* is practically established.

§ 3. Comparison by *-er* and *-est* is called in the following terminational comparison, although a shorter and more usual name is «inflectional», — Sweet, for example, N. Eng. Gr. etc. uses «inflectional» and «periphrastic» —, which seems less accurate, since there is, strictly speaking, no inflection. The Old English terminational comparatives were inflectional, but became invariable in consequence of the general levelling of case endings in Middle English.

§ 4. Comparison by *more* and *most* first appears in the thirteenth century, but does not become common till more than a century later (Mätzner p. 297. Sweet, N. Eng. Gr. § 1046). The causes contributing to its introduction and spread will not be discussed here (v. Preface). Comparison by *more* and *most* is often called the «French» or «Romance» method in contrast with the Teutonic terminational method, because analogous to the comparison by *plus*, *più*, etc., prevailing in the Romance languages. The designation periphrastic is to be preferred because the English comparison by *more* and *most*, though similar to the French or Romance comparison, is not the same. The Romance languages use the definite article + the comparative to indicate the superlative degree. In English, the superlative is formed, not by *the more* but by *most*. Moreover the name «French» or «Romance» method suggests that this method of comparison in English is borrowed from the French, which is probably not the case. It resembles, rather, the Latin. An important group of adjectives in Latin form the comparative and

superlative degrees by prefixing *magis* (more) and *maximē* (most). So *idōneus*, 'adapted', *magis idōneus*, 'more adapted', *maximē idōneus*, 'most adapted'. Cf. Bennett, Latin Grammar, § 74, Wöllflin, Lateinische und Romanische Comparation. If periphrastic comparison in English is not a native development, it seems more probable that it was borrowed from the Latin, like absolute comparison (§ 78), and many other constructions, than from the French. It began to appear at a time when Latin influence was becoming strong.

The resemblance to the Latin was noted as early as Wallace, *Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae*, 1653, who wrote, «*sed et uterque gradus per circumlocutionem formantur ut apud Latinos: ut more fair, most fair*». His expression *per circumlocutionem* (= periphrastic) is also noteworthy.

After the fourteenth century, periphrastic comparison steadily gains ground, until by the time of Shakespeare it is as common as it is today.

§ 5. With regard to distinctions in usage between terminational and periphrastic comparison there is not a little discussion. Does the mode of comparison depend upon the ending of the adjective, or upon its length? A glance at the history of opinion on this question is interesting.

Alexander Gill, *Logonomia Anglica*, 1619, believes that the ending governs the mode of comparison: «*Per er et est non comparantur verbalia activa in ing; ut luv^{ing} amans: nec passiva; ut luv^{ed} amatus, taught doctus; uti nec composita cum abl, ful, les, lik, . . .; neque etiam illa quae per *jv*, (-ive,) *ish*, et multa quae per *lj*, (*ly*), aut *us* . . . Huc etiam refer materialia, ut *gôldn* aureus, *stōni* lapideus; item quae tempus significant et ordinem . . .; ut *wintrj**

hibernus, *second*, *third*. Et quamvis aliquando audias *stönier* aut *fämuser*, tamen pro libertate loquendi tolerabilius erit sermo, potius quam laudabilis scriptura. Per *signa* tamen omnia fere quae diximus comparantur: ut *mör luvig*, *möst luvig*, etc.».

Ben Jonson, *The English Grammar*, 1640: «Both degrees are formed of the positive; the comparative by putting to *er*; the superlative by putting to *est*; . . . *learned*, *learneder*, *learnedest*».

John Wallis, *Grammatica Anglicanae*, 1653: «Gradus comparativus formatur a Positivo addendo *er*; Superlativus addendo *est*. Ut *fair* formosus, *fairer* formosior, *fairest* formosissimus. Sed et uterque gradus per circumlocutionem formantur, ut apud Latinos: ut, *more fair*, *most fair*». Attention has already been called to the last sentence.

Greenwood, *English Grammar*, 1722, enters, like Gill, into details; and with him, as with Gill, the mode of comparison depends on the ending, not on the length of the adjective.

«Adjectives, such chiefly as come from the Latin, and that end in *ain* as *certain*; in *ive* as *fugitive*; in *cal* as *angelical*; in *en* as *golden*; in *ly* as *fatherly*; in *less* as *friendless*; in *ry* as *necessary*; in *al* as *general*; in *able* as *commendable*; in *ing* as *loving*; in *ish* as *peevish*; in *est* as *honest*; in *ous* as *vertuous*; in *ant* as *constant*, in *ed* as *wicked*; in *id* as *rigid*; in *som* as *troublesom*, form or make the Comparative degree by putting the word *more* before them, and the Superlative by putting the word *most* before them».

Samuel Johnson, *Grammar of the English Tongue* 1785: «The comparison of adjectives is very uncertain, and being much regulated by commodiousness of utterance, or agree-

ableness of sound, is not easily reduced to rules . . . Polysyllables . . . are seldom compared otherwise than by *more* or *most* . . . Dissyllables are seldom compared if they terminate in *full*, *less*, *ing*, *ous*, *id*, *ed*, *al*, *ent*, *ain*, or *ive*».

Lindley Murray, *English Grammar*, 1809: «Mono-syllables for the most part are compared by *er* and *est*, and dissyllables by *more* and *most*. Dissyllables ending in *y*, as 'happy', and in *le* after a mute, as 'able', 'ample', or accented on the last syllable, as 'discreet', 'polite', easily admit of *er* and *est*. Words of more than two syllables hardly ever admit of these terminations».

William Cobbett, *Grammar of the English Language*, 1818: «When the positive contains but one syllable, the degrees are generally formed by adding *er* or *est*. When the positive contains two syllables, it is a matter of taste which method you shall use. The ear is the best guide. But when the positive contains more than two syllables, the degree must be formed by *more* and *most*».

In the German edition of Cobbett's grammar (Kalt-schmidt, Leipzig, 1839) the rule is otherwise stated, *more* and *most* comparison being restricted chiefly to words «coming from the Latin».

J. P. Marsh, *Lectures on the English Language*, 1861, speaks emphatically in favor of the terminational method: « . . . recently in conformity to a rule which has no foundation in good taste or in the practice of the best writers, we have, in polysyllables, almost exclusively employed the comparison by *more* and *most*. . . . The rule never was adopted by thoroughly English authors, and is happily little observed by the best usage of the present day»

R. Morris, *Historical Outlines of English Accidence*, 1873: «The comparative is formed by adding *-er* to the positive: the superlative by adding *-est* to the positive. This rule applies to (1) all monosyllabic adjectives; (2) all dissyllabic adjectives with the accent upon the last syllable, — as *genteel*, *genteeler*, *genteelest*; (3) adjectives of two syllables in which the last syllable is elided before the comparative, as *able*, *abler*, *ablest*; (4) adjectives of two syllables ending in *-y*, which is changed to *i* before the suffixes of comparison, as *happy*, *happier*, *happiest* . . . »

«Older writers on grammar make the mode of comparison depend on the ending, not on the length of the adjective: if the adjectival ending is *-ing*, *-ish*, *-id*, *-en*, *-al*, *-ent*, *-ive*, *-ous*, the comparative is made by *more* and *most*. The best authors, however, are not guided by this rule.»

W. M. Baskerville and J. W. Sewell, *English Grammar*, New York, 1895: «The English is somewhat capricious in choosing between inflected forms and those with *more* and *most*, so that no inflexible rule can be given as to the formation of comparatives and superlatives».

«The general rule is that monosyllables and easily pronounced words of two syllables add *-er* and *-est*; the other words are preceded by *more* and *most*. But room must be left in such a rule for pleasantness of sound, and for variety of expression. To see how literary English overrides any rule that could be given, examine the following, taken at random These long, harsh forms are usually avoided, but *more* and *most* are frequently used with monosyllables.»

Henry Sweet, *New English Grammar* 1896: «. . . periphrastic comparison has come in MnE. to be applied

chiefly to longer and more unfamiliar adjectives, the inflectional comparison being restricted more and more to the shorter adjectives, namely —

(a) monosyllables, such as *big, high, young, sad*.

(b) dissyllabic adjectives with the stress on the last syllable, such as *polite, severe, complete, minute*. But many of these have the periphrastic comparison, which is the more usual of the two when the adjective ends in a heavy consonant group, as in *abrupt, correct, distinct, ancient, frequent*.

(c) many dissyllabic adjectives with the stress on the first syllable, such as *tender, bitter, narrow, happy, easy, early, lovely*, and others in *-ly, -able, -simple, -wholesome, -cruel*. Those in *-ish, -s, and -st* have the periphrastic comparison, so as to avoid the repetition of the hiss consonant in the superlative: *selfish, childish; adverse; honest, earnest, modest*. So also those in *-ive*, such as *active*, apparently because most of them are long words, the shorter ones being mostly words whose meaning does not lend itself to comparison. Such an adjective as *pleasant*, on the contrary, is compared by inflection in spite of its heavy ending, because its meaning makes it liable to frequent comparison.

The periphrastic comparison is followed —

(a) by all adjectives of more than two syllables, such as *difficult, ignorant, important, comfortable, respectable* — all of which have besides heavy endings — *curious, generous, necessary, general, satisfactory*.

(b) by those in *-ful*, such as *useful, awful, cheerful; respectful*.

(c) by those in *-ed* and *-ing*: *learned, wretched, wicked, cunning, tempting, charming, improving*. These adjectives are not inflected because they have the form of verbals,

although some of them, such as *wretched* and *cunning* are of a different origin. *Wicked* sometimes has superlative *wickedest*».

G. R. Carpenter, *Principles of English Grammar*, New York, 1899: «Adjectives of one syllable, and some adjectives of two syllables, are usually compared by the addition of *-er* and *-est*, and all longer adjectives are usually compared by using *more* and *most* The ear alone decides which method is preferable».

J. Klapperich, *Englische Studien* XVII, 1892, after a careful canvass of the question, sums up as follows: «Wenn wir diesen allgemeinen und guten sprachgebrauch berücksichtigen, so wird die regel lauten: Bei den zweisilbigen adjectiven tritt die deutsche steigerungsweise ein, 1. wenn sie den ton auf der zweiten silbe haben, 2. wenn sie auf *y* oder *le* mit vorhergehenden konsonanten, oder auf *er* und *ow* ausgehen.

Ebenso bei *common*, *pleasant*, *handsome* und *quiet*. Nach dieser regel hätten wir dann eine menge 'ausnahmen' weniger zu verzeichnen.»

§ 6. The modern «rules», so far as any can be formulated, seem well stated in the conservative and summarizing form last quoted. The present tendency is to give up much attempt at detail, and to admit that literary English is likely to break any rules that can be given. So, in two late English grammars quoted, Carpenter writes, «The ear alone decides which method is preferable», (compare Johnson and Cobbett earlier), and Baskerville and Sewell write, «But much room must be left in such a rule for pleasantness of sound, and for variety of expression». Even the few rules given by Klapperich are not absolute. Dissyllabic oxytones form their comparatives with *more* and

most as well as with *-er* and *-est*. Compare the examples cited in § 26, *more precise*, *more severe*, etc., all of which are common enough in present English. Further, dissyllables in *-le* and *-er* are occasionally compared periphrastically. Dr. Sweet gives a careful analysis, and his remarks hold, without question, for normal, written usage. Such comparatives as *gallanter*, *wretcheder*, *gracefuller*, do not represent ordinary usage. Yet examples are easily found. To cite a few at random, William Morris writes *crookeder*, H. G. Wells, *wretcheder*. George Meredith, *powerfuller*, W. D. Howells, *reverendest*, Carlyle, *indisputablest*. A glance at current literature would multiply such forms.

§ 7. Exceptions to the usual rules are especially common in poetry. It is well known that here exaggerated use has been made of terminational comparison since Shakespeare. Swinburne, for example, writes, *splendider*, *patienter*, *wretcheder*. Additional instances, with remarks on Swinburne's fondness for such comparison may be found in Dr. Wollaeger's dissertation, «Analytical Studies in Swinburne's Style», Heidelberg, 1899. Another source of abnormal terminational comparatives is colloquial language and dialect. Franz (Engl. Studien 12. 230) cites *leakingest*, *naturalest*, *seasonablest*, *crookedest*, *delightfullest*, etc. in Dickens. Lewis Carrall uses *curiouser*. *Consaiteder*, *unjustest*, *modheratest*, occur in a dialect story in the Century, November 1899, the double comparative *nicerer* in another, and in a recent novel by P. L. Ford, the double superlative *bestest*. In fact, the terminational comparison of unexpected adjectives is a much employed method of indicating colloquial and dialect speech.

§ 8. On the whole, the conclusion must be drawn that the mode of comparison depends mostly on the length

of the adjective, the spirit of the language seeming averse from the lengthening of long words by additional syllables. Monosyllables are compared ordinarily according to the terminational method. Words of more than two syllables are compared ordinarily by *more* and *most*. In dissyllables, the mode of comparison is governed to a certain extent by the ending — some terminations undoubtedly lending themselves more easily to the Teutonic mode, e. g. *-y*, *-le*, *-er*, *-ow*, — or by the familiarity of the word, or by the author's preference.

§ 9. In the XV and the XVI century there was even greater freedom than exists today. An exception is with participles, which follow uniformly the periphrastic method, until near the close of the period under discussion. In the XV century, adjectives were compared according to either method, without regard to length or ending. In the XVI century, the restriction of the terminational method to shorter and more familiar words was well on the way, but was not fully established. On the whole, usage was in a half-way state, at the end of the sixteenth century, midway between the usage of the Middle Ages and present usage. Discussion in more detail is reserved for the following.

§ 10. In the citation of examples in the following, as suggested elsewhere, fullness and variety of illustration have been the aim. When few examples are given, it is because few were found, or, when found, were repetitions; or because the point seemed too well known to need much elucidation. As will be seen, when not according to endings, the arrangement of examples is approximately chronological. The limited and stereotyped character of the adjective vocabulary throughout much of the fifteenth and the six-

teenth century, in comparison with present English, seems worthy of comment. With the exception of the *Morte Darthur*, full of loan words from the French, the richness of language and freedom of form shown in Chaucer are not met with again until the time of Spenser and Shakespeare.

I. Terminational Comparison.

1. Formal Elements.

§ 11. The normal endings of the comparative and the superlative are *-er* and *-est*. Fifteenth century variants for the comparative are *-ir* *-yr*, *-ur*, *-ar*; for the superlative, *-ist*, *-yst*, *-ast*. Of these, *-ar* and *-ist* or *-yst* are found sometimes in the sixteenth century, *-ar* and *-yst* disappearing earliest.

1) Comparatives: *eldar*, *Morte D.* 105,23. *byggar*, ib. 560,19. *freschar*, *G. of W.* 8137. *boldear*, *doghtyar*, ib. 9647—8. *wysar*, *Nature* 88,461. *farar* (= fairer) *Douglas I* 97,17. *lengar*, *Digby Mysteries* 69,406. *beytterar*, ib. 103,1268. *formar*, *Skelton I* 23. *rediar*, *Elyot II* 340. — *more reufullyr*, *Morte D.* 425,16. — *bettir*, *Douglas I* 108,4. *lattir*, ib. II 149,19. *vtir*, ib. III 307,18. — *bettur*, *G. of W.* 796,748. etc. *grettur*, ib. 11730.

2) Superlatives: *farast* (=fairest) *Douglas II* 26,15. — *strengyst*, *Morte D.* 69,3. *gentelyst*, ib. 390,14. *boldyst*, *G. of W.* 810. *strengyst*, ib. 6604. *lothyst*, *Skelton I* 2. — *gretist*, *Digby Mysteries* 172,39. *myldist*, ib. 194,690. *wysist*, *Elyot II* 383. *newist*, *Latimer S.* 97. *chiefist*, *Utop.* 115. *pooriste*, *Horestes* 532,1051.

§ 12. Adjectives in *-le* and *-er* (phonetically *l̥* and *r̥*) may show contraction in comparison, the *l̥* or *r̥* of the ending losing their syllabic function and becoming consonants, as *symplest*, *bittrest*. There is little uniformity in usage until the latter half of the sixteenth century. In present English, contraction is found regularly with adjectives in *-le*, not with those in *-er*.

symplyer, Morte D. 198,10. *symplest*, ib. 567,20. *gentiller*, ib. 650,10. *gentelyst*, ib. 390,14. *abeler*, ib. 658,1. *noblest*, ib. 339,5. *horryblest*, ib. 296,17. *humblest*, Lusty Juventus 53. *gentlest*, TM. 236. *genteleste*, Utop. 91. *gentillest*, Surrey TM. 237. *idelest*, Sidney Ap. 20. *nimblest*, Nash UT. 122. *passablest*, Bacon 78. — *beytterer*, Digby Mysteries 103,1268. *bittrest*, Latimer S. 190. *byttereste*, ib. 190—1. *vttrest*, TM. 105.

§ 13. Adjectives in *-ous* sometimes show contraction of the last syllable with the superlative ending, the repetition of the *-s* being the cause of the contraction. This is seen characteristically in the Morte Darthur. A few examples are found in the sixteenth century.

The *merueyllest* knygt, Morte D. 92,30. the *merueylloust* knyght, ib. 278,35. the *merueylloust*, ib. 697,31—2. the *curteyst* knyghte, ib. 197,30. one of the *perilloust* knyghtes of the world, ib. 216,11. one of the *perylloust* knyghtes, ib. 244,6. the most *mischeuoust* knyght, ib. 413,32. the *vylaynst* kyng and knyght, ib. 450,18. *moost orgulist* wise, ib. 840,6. (but *famousest*, ib. 278,22. etc.). the *famoust* Queene, Puttenham 242 (verse). *venomost*, Nash UT. 134.

§ 14. The *e* of the superlative is also omitted occasionally after other consonants than *s*, in poetry, less often in prose. This becomes very common

in the next century, cf. Drayton's *aged'st*, *eld'st*, *strong'st*, *horrid'st*, Poly. 7—15, or the instances in Shakespeare.

chiefst, Gooze 54. *valiant'st*, Damon and Pithias 364. *mournefulst*, Spenser Shep. Cal. XI 79, 53. *warlikst*, Lodge, 122. *most learnedst*, W. Webbe 18. *learnedst* masters, ib. 36. *hollowst*, Puttenham 144. *dearst*, ib. 231. *minionst* ib. 232. *cunningst*, Peele Ed. I 379.

Sometimes these contracted forms are further mutilated. So *valyaunts* for *valyauntst*, one of the most *valyaunts* men, Morte D. 83, 31. (Römstedt, 38, cites this as a romance plural.)

§ 15. A final syllabic *-y* is often changed to *-i-* before the comparative endings, as always in present English. Usage on this point was not fixed at the end of the sixteenth century. Rarely, the final vowel is omitted altogether, before the ending, giving *-e-*; or the latter contracts with the former, giving *-i-* in place of the normal *-ie-* or *-ye-*.

1) *thriftyer*, Gosson 75. *goodlier*, Puttenham 122. — *manliest*, York Pl. 290, 519. *luffeliest*, ib. 308, 17. *homylyest*, Skelton I 70. *goodlyest*, TM. 126. *happiest*, ib. 185. *readyest*, W. Webbe 64. *goodliest*, Ascham Schol. 130. *holiest*, ib. 37.

2) the *fellowlist* prist, Misogonus 445, 50. *cowardleste*, More Utop. 39.

§ 16. After a short vowel, a final consonant is often doubled in the comparative and superlative. So generally in present English.

byggar, Morte D. 656, 32. *byggest*, ib. 814, 21. *doolfuller*, ib. 846, 5. *gladder*, York Pl. 425, 135. *maddest* Four P P. 382. *fitter*, Ascham Tox. 124. *thinner*, ib. 132. *welcommest*, Lyly End. 41. But *trymest*, *meryest*, *pynest*, Heywood Love 171. etc.

§ 17. The isolated comparative *darre* (=dearer) occurs in G. of W. 3967. It is probably not a contraction of *dearer*, on the analogy of ME. *narre*, *farre*, and *warre*, §§ 62, 65, 50, but merely the old weak form, OE. *dēorra*, ME. *dërre* > *dërre* > *darre*.

2. Use.

§ 18. In the fifteenth century, although the comparison by *more* and *most* is widespread, the terminational remains the prevailing type in all dialects (§ 24). The endings *-er* and *-est* are added, not only to native English words like *hard*, *great*, *strong*, but to romance and classical loan words like *famous*, *perillous*, *marvellous*, or to hybrid words like *doleful*, without any feeling of incongruity. Later, the endings *-er* and *-est* are found less normally with longer words, terminational comparison alternating with comparison by *more* and *most*; but there is still no uniformity of usage.

The endings *-er* and *-est* are added to monosyllabic, dissyllabic, and trisyllabic or longer adjectives.

§ 19. With monosyllables (§ 25): *gladder*, Morte D. 53, 23. *koler*, ib. 72, 19. *falsest*, ib. 67, 26. *fowlest*, ib. 628, 9. *wiser*, York Pl. 283, 312. *fayner*, ib. 297, 156. *derrest*, ib. 282, 279. *gaiest*, ib. 318, 339. *freschar*, G. of W. 8137. *fayrer*, ib. 8444. *dulcer*, Douglas I 29, 14. *truest*, PL. XXVI. *tallest*, ib. XXXIX. *gretter*, Elyot I 168. *fitter*, Ascham Tox. 116. *leefer*, Wyatt TM. 109. *aptest*, ib. 172. *rightest*, Utop. 144. *sadder*, Udall RD. 67. *saddest*, Gascoigne 49. *grauest*, ib. 49. *fayrest*, Watson 78. *lyker*, Lyly Euph. 87. *liefest*, Puttenham 214. *scarcest*, ib. 207.

§ 20. With dissyllables (§ 26):

1) Oxytones: *discrettest*, Ascham Schol. 57. *discreetest*,

Puttenham 270, 271. *directer*, ib. 238. *profoundest*, ib. 125. *diuineſt*, Markham 43. *austerest*, Nash UT. 102. *expertest*, Spenser FQ. IX 4. *extremest*, ib.

2) Adjectives in *-y*: *hardyer*, Morte D. 305, 34. *pryuyest*, ib. 51, 15. *semelyest*, ib. 145, 15. *gryſylyest*, ib. 584, 22. *manlyest*, York Pl. 290, 519. *luffeliest*, ib. 308, 17. *thriftiest*, PL. XLVIII 35. *heartiest*, ib. IV 43. *lowliest*, ib. LX 47. *pratyer*, Skelton I 299. *homylyest*, ib. 70. *busier*, Latimer, S. 46. *goodlyest*, TM. 126. *happiest*, ib. 185. *worthiest*, Wyatt TM. 121. *frienullier*, Wyatt 64. *holyest*, Utop. 146. *thriftyer*, Gosson 75. *deadlyer*, Lyly Euph. 98. *likelier*, ib. EE. 314. *lasiest*, ib. 419. *kingliest*, Misfortunes of Arthur 291. *goodlier*, Puttenham 122. *cleaneliest*, id. 275. *comeliest*, id. 207. *readier*, Kyd Sp.Trag. 99. *readiest*, ib. 12.

3) Adjectives in *-le* and *-er* (§ 12): *simplyer*, Morte D. 198, 10. *abeler*, ib. 658, 1. *nobleſt*, ib. 339, 5. *gentelyſt*, ib. 390, 14. *jentileſt*, York Pl. 484, 132. *gentilleſt*, ib. 481, 2. *genteleſte*, Utop. 91. *humbleſt*, Misfortunes of Arthur 275. *ideleſt*, Sidney Ap. 20. *nimbleſt*, Nash UT. 122. — *beytterer*, Digby Mysteries 92, 997. *bittreſt*, Latimer S. 190. *byttereſte*, ib. *vttreſt*, TM. 105. *properest*, Lyly EE. 293, 352. *ſlenderer*, Puttenham 114. *ſlenderest*, Peele BA. 428.

4) Adjectives in *-ful*: *ſeythfulleſt*, Morte D. 48, 36. *ſhamefulleſt*, ib. 359, 23. *wofulleſt*, ib. 407, 4. *dolefulleſt*, ib. 425, 8. *Ioyefulleſt*, ib. 524, 32. *dolefuller*, G. of W. 10644. *ferfulſt*, Digby Mysteries 41, 373. *thanfulleſt*, Heywood Love 171. *wofulleſt*, Norton Gorb. 125. *lawfuller*, Northbrooke 40. *faithfulleſt*, Lyly, letter to Watson, Watson's Poems 30. *mournefulſt*, Spenser Shep. Cal. XI 79, 53.

5) Adjectives in *-ed*: *wickedder*, Northbrooke 133. *wre(t)-chedeſt*, TM. 114. *wretched'ſt*, Greene AA. 241. *learnedſt*, Ascham Schol. 247; W. Webbe 18, 36.

6) Adjectives in *-ous*, *-ish*, *-est*: *famoussest*, Morte D. 278, 22 *greuouser*, Latimer S. 191. *famoust*, Puttenham 242. — *thievisher*, Gammer Gurton's Needle 240. — *earnester*, Ascham Tox. 50, *honester*, Damon and Pithias 181; Ascham Schol. 37; Respublica 347, 20; Common Conditions 641, 1189; Bacon 90; Latimer S. 49.

7) Adjectives in *-ow*: *salowest*, Heywood Love 171. *narrower*, Ascham Tox. 157; Lyly Euph. 433. *narrowest*, ib. *hollowst*, Puttenham 144.

8) Adjectives ending in heavy consonant groups: *valy-
anter*, Morte D. 447, 17. *valyantest*, ib. 454, 21. *forwarder*, PL. XCI 70. *auncienter*, W. Webbe 87. *auncientest*, ib. 26, 27; Faust-Book 60; Utop. 94, 145. *gallantest*, Puttenham 204; Gosson 58. *perfecter*, ib. 68.; Ascham Tox. 20. *perfectest*, Gosson 58; Bacon 148; Nash UT. 69; Damon and Pithias 86. *pleasanter*, Wyatt, 60. *pleasantest*, Puttenham 261. *decenter*, ib. 149. *inwardest*, Bacon 109.

9) Various adjectives: *ryallest*, Morte D. 163, 5. *secrettest*, Berners 7. *murrainer*, Gammer Gurton's Needle 221. *cruellest*, TM. 252. *perfiter*, Ascham Tox. 21. *minions't*, Puttenham 232. *ingratest*, ib. 277. *wantonest*, W. Webbe 41. *welcommest*, Lyly End. 41. *wholesomest*, ib. Euph. 467. *firtilest*, Sidney 62.

§ 21. With trisyllables (§ 27): *worshypfuller*, Morte D. 668, 3. *worshipfullest*, ib. 425, 26. *merueyllest*, ib. 66, 22. *horryblest*, ib. 296, 17. *gloryosest*, Digby Mysteries 151, 351. *violenter*, Surrey TM. 27. *contraryest*, Ancient Ballads, 39. *diligenter*, Latimer S. 53. *diligenteste*, ib. Plough. 30. *cowardleste*, Utop. 39. *manerlyest*, Heywood Love 171. *inuentiuest*, Ascham Schol. 115. *dellicatest*, Gascoigne St. Gl. 82. *dangerousest*, Gosson 70. *notablest*, ib. 68. *cowardlier*, Clyomon and Clamydes 507. *terriblest*, ib. 503. *curiouser*,

Greene AA. 246. *beautifullest*, Marlowe Faustus 98. (Quarto of 1604). *tunablest*, Lodge 98. *delicatest*, Lyly Euph. 35. *passablest*, Bacon 78. *beautifullest*, Nash UT. 57, 139. *beggariest*, ib. 198. *triumphantest*, ib. 79. *excellentest*. Sidney 28.

§ 22. With quadrisyllables (§ 28): *honorablest*, Utop. 94. *honourablest*, Bacon 14. *admirablest*, Nash UT. 130; Marlowe Faustus 98 (Quarto of 1604). *reasonablest*, Lodge 65. *melancholiest*, Lyly EE. 287.

§ 23. A glance at these examples shows by what authors they are used, and in what sort of writing, and makes clear the agreement or disagreement with present usage. Among the monosyllabic adjectives, the comparatives *rightest* and *likier* seem noteworthy, as forms scarcely to be found in present English. Among the dissyllables, such comparatives as *wickeder*, *inwardest*, *ancienter*, *gallantest*, etc. were as common then as now, and the longer comparatives, as *dangerousest*, *delicatest*, *excellentest*, *gloriouser*, *admirablest*, etc. perhaps more common. Instances like the latter are found often in modern English (§ 6), but they are exceptional, not normal. Nor, notwithstanding the freedom then prevailing, were they «normal» at the end of the sixteenth century. They were in the fifteenth, but a century later they are optional forms, to be regarded neither as normal nor as exceptional.

Many of the more unusual comparatives cited are found in passages written in colloquial style, or in dialogue (cf. similar usage in modern English, § 7), as *thievisher*, *murrainer*, Gammer Gurton's Needle, Nash's *triumphantest*, *beautifullest*, or Marlowe's *admirablest*. On the other hand, comparatives like *ancienter*, *perfecter*, are used by careful

writers, such as Ascham, in passages of studied literary cast. No very certain distinction can be made here.

A summary of the chief differences between sixteenth century and modern English comparison will be found at the end of the next chapter.

II. Periphrastic Comparison.

§ 24. In the fifteenth century, comparison by *more* and *most*, though well on the way, is not fully established, comparison by *-er* and *-est* remaining the prevailing method. The York Plays from the early part of the century, plays which are not only rude but provincial, being written in the Northern dialect, show scarcely any periphrastic superlatives not elatives (§ 78). In the *Morte Darthur*, which may stand as the most important text of the period, *more* and *most* comparatives are common, but are by no means normal. (Baldwin, § 42, writes, « . . . except in these double forms, the *more* and *most* comparison appears very rarely », but many instances are cited below, and these may be multiplied.) In the Paston Letters, periphrastic comparatives are more frequent, at first mostly elatives, then oftener genuine comparatives. Numerically they are exceeded, however, by terminational comparatives. Throughout the century when both methods are used, the form of comparison is governed by no fixed principle, such as length, ending, accent, or the source of the word. Instead the two methods are used quite indiscriminately, according to the authors choice. The belief for a long time current (§§ 4—5) that comparison by *more* and *most*

is restricted chiefly to words of Latin or romance origin, is without foundation.

During the fifteenth century, the use of periphrastic superlatives increases steadily, until, with the beginning of the sixteenth century, the comparison by *more* and *most* is as common as it is today, because of the widespread fondness for elative superlatives. For some statistics on this point v. § 79.

Comparison by *more* and *most* is found with monosyllables and dissyllables, as well as with longer adjectives.

§ 25. With monosyllables (§ 19): *more nere*, Morte D. 70, 27. *more hyghe* lygnage, ib. 222, 16. *more like*, Caxton, En. 2, 16. *more dere*, G. of W. 845. *more hyghe*, Bl. and Eg. 176, 9. *more grete*, ib. 187, 18. *most fayr*, ib. 156, 12—13. *moost thyk*, ib. 166. 13. *more large*, Elyot II 289. *more fitte*, Ascham Tox. 66. *more straunge*, Heywood Love 163, 87. *more rough*, W. Webbe 59. *more hote*, Watson 92. *more strong*, Marlowe Tamb. II 67; Bacon 141. *more false*, Lyly Euph. 77. *more white*, Spenser FQ. I 4. *mooste lyke*, Elyot II 371. *most loth*, *most hard*, TM. 253. *most dere*, Lever 128. *most rude*, Ancient Ballads 119. *most fit*, Dce 35; Ascham Tox. 16. thus dooing you shall be *most fayre*, *most riteh*, *most wise*, *most all*, you shall dwell upon Superlatives, Sidney Ap. 72.

More than half these examples are from prose, where the writer need not have been influenced by metrical requirements.

§ 26. With dissyllables (§ 20):

1) Oxytones: *most entier*, Bl. and Eg. 179, 5. *more syncere*, Latimer S. 20. *moost abiecte*, ib. Plough 27. *most abiect*, More Utop. 102. *mooste experte*, ib. 47. *more obscure*, Hakluyt 36. *more precise*, Misfortunes of Arthur 256. *more*

divine, Marlowe Tamb. II 72. *more profound*, *more expert*, Lyly Euph. 440. *more exact*, Puttenham 120. *most severe*, ib. 289.

2) Adjectives in *-y*: *more hardy*, Morte D. 53, 22; 80, 27. *moost manly*, ib. 163, 9. *most holy*, PL. XXX 21. *most goodly*, ib. XLIX 37. *most hartly*, Nature 154, 1272. *more mightie*, Hakluyt 83. *most easie*, ib. 25. *most trustie*, Udall, RD. 32. *most stony*, TM. 179. *most louelie*, Markham 83. *more happy*, Norton Gorb. 130. *more costlye*, Ascham Tox. 128. *moost redy*, ib. 60. *most happie*, ib. Schol. 35. *more cumelie*, ib. 44. *most busy*, Gosson 48. *more worthye*, Lever 24. *most worthy*, Greene BB. 156. *more redy*, Lyly EE. 248. *most witty*, Puttenham 60. *more weary*, Sidney Ap. 61.

3) Adjectives in *-le* and *-er*: *most noble*, Morte D. 163, 2. *moste gentill*, York Pl. 249, 193. *most suttell*, Bale KJ. 62. *moste gentill*, Elyot II 149. *more ample*, ib. II 289. *most noble*, Latimer S. 32; Puttenham 292. *mooste able*, Ascham Tox. 18. *more noble*, ib. Schol. 59. *most humble*, E. Webbe 14. *more gentle*, Lyly Euph. 71. *more simple*, ib. EE. 258. — *more sober*, Bale KJ. 99. *more proper*, Elyot II 325. *more eager*, Markham 82. *most proper*, Ascham Schol. 117. *mooste tender*, More Utop. 99. *more bitter*, Lyly Euph. 114. 374, 409. *more slender*, Puttenham 108. *more proper*, ib. 159.

4) Adjectives in *-ful*: *more spedeful*, Four S. I 12. *moste hatefull*, R. and B. 147. *more shameful*, Skelton 189. *more careful*, Latimer S. 46. *mooste nedeful*, ib. 124. *most lawfull*, ib. 21. *more paynfull*, Heywood Love 186, 842. *most paynfull*, ib. 163, 82. *most doulful*, Respublica 331, 33. *more watchfull*, ib. 328, 80. *moste spitefull*, More Utop. 26. *most wofull*, Surrey TM. 17. *more nedeful*, Ascham Schol. 81.

most ncedful, Puttenham 35. *more faithfull*, Lyly EE. 258. *more fruitefull*, Sidney Ap. 51.

5) Adjectives in *-ed*: *more wicked*, Darius 405, 1212. *most wycked*, Bale, Three L. 63. *most blyssed*, ib. KJ. 5. *most wicked*, Utop. 160. *most lcarnd*, W. Webbe 29. *most wrctched*, Peele OWT. 453; W. Webbe 44. *most sacred*, Peele AP. 32.

6) Adjectives in *-ous*, *-ish*, *-est*: *more preciose*, Digby Mysteries, 183, 363. *most prccious*, Lusty Juventus 60. *most famous*, R. and B. 39. *most monstrouse*, Latimer S. 168. *moste graciously*, Ascham Tox. 13. *most tedious*, ib. Schol. 27. *most gorgeous*, More Utop. 29. *mooste greuous*, ib. 125. *most heynous*, ib. 126. *most gracious*, Lyly Euph. 267. *more wondrous*, Spenser FQ. XI 13. *more righteous*, Northbrooke 80. *more curious*, Puttenham 168. — *most folisshe*, Elyot II 110. *most clownish*, W. Webbe 60. — *moste honest*, Udall RD. 85. *moost honest*, *moost earnest*, Ascham Tox. 36.

7) Adjectives in *-ow*: *most mellowe*, Elyot I 28.

8) Adjectives in heavy consonant groups: *more pleasant*, Digby Mysteries 67, 351. *moste prudent*, Elyot II 57. *most frequent*, ib. 127. *more perfect*, Wyatt 219. *more decent*, W. Webbe 29. *mooste constante*, More Utop. 146. *most auncient*, Gascoigne, St. Gl. 35. *more auntient*, Lyly Euph. 217. *more gallant*, *more valyant*, ib. 313.

9) Various adjectives: *more special*, *most partial*, PL. XXXVIII 28. *more certeyne*, Four S. II 44. *moste mortall*, Elyot 119. *most cruell*, ib. 148. *more fucile*, ib. II 259. *more solem*, Skelton I 133. *most holsome*, Ascham Tox. 38. *most perfit*, ib. Schol. 132. *moste barayne*, Heywood Wether 237, 701. *more private*, Kyd Sp. Tr. 145. *most certeine*, *more wanton*, Lyly Euph. 153. *most quyet*, ib. 188.

most loathsome, ib. End. 51. *more ciuill*, Puttenham 22. *most cruell*, ib. 227. *most wholsom*, Sidney Ap. 40.

§ 27. With trisyllables (§ 21): *most peryllous*, Morte D. 232,7. *moost vylaynous*, ib. 428,1. *moost horryble*, ib. 431,9. *more naturel*, ib. 649,2. *most debonair*, ib. 694, 18—19. *moost bounteous*, ib. 733,7. *more pitevs*, Digby Mysteries, 182, 322. *most curyous*, Caxton En. 319. *more pernicious*, Elyot II 349. *more consonant*, Four S. II 44. *more rebellious*, Latimer S. 137. *more marvellous*, Four PP. 379. *more curious*, Damon and Pithias 47. *more contrarye*, Lever 27. *most dissolute*, W. Webbe 44. *most dangerous*, Northbrooke 55. *most accustomed*, ib. 133. *more prayse worthy*, Lodge 8. *more glorious*, Lyly Euph. 184. *more pestilent*, ib. EE. 327. *more amorous*, ib. 317. *most excellent*, *most arrogant*, Puttenham 21. *more serious*, Kyd Sp. Trag. 58. *more delicate*, ib. 35.

§ 28. With quadrisyllables (§ 22): *more acceptable*, Morte D. 40, 16. *moost adventurous* ib. 663, 33. *mor tolerabill*, Digby Mysteries 212, 1218. *most expedient*, PL. CI 80. *more presumptuous*, R. and B. 102. *more commendable*, Latimer S. 133. *moste profitable*, Ascham Tox. 79. *most miserable*, Wyatt TM. 63. *more profitable*, More Utop. 112. *most disconsolate*, Markham 64. *most injurious*, Greene AA. 227. *most notorious*, Kyd Sp. Trag. 121.

§ 29. Of several adjectives in succession, only the first takes *more* or *most*.

The *mooste noble* and *valiant* princis, Elyot I 39. the *most sweet* and *pleasant* redinge, ib. 55. *more sad* and *homely* garments, Puttenham 290. *mooste experte*, *politique* and *cunnyng*, More Utop. 47. the *most famous*, *renowned* and *excellent*, W. Webbe 28.

§ 30. In the comparison of two qualities of the same subject, only the periphrastic mode is used. So in modern English. «When an object is said to have more of one quality than another, the phrase with *more* is alone used, thus 'the news was more true than pleasant.' (*Not truer than pleasant.*)» W. D. Whitney, *Essentials of English Grammar*. Compare the German, *mehr wahr als angenehm*, not *wahrer als angenehm*. Cases in which the terminational mode is used, as Shakespeare's *fairer than honest* (cited by Franz § 62), impossible logically, are due to the mistaken conception of *more fair* as a comparative.

A thyng by my iudgement *more costlye than nedefull*, Ascham *Tox.* 128. *more earnall than spiritual, more worldlye then godly*, Lever 72.

§ 31. An adjective may be compared according to both modes, terminational and periphrastic, by the same author sometimes in the same passage:

One of the *perilloust* knyghtes of the world, Morte D. 216, 11; the *most peryllous* knyght, *ib.* 232, 7. the *happiest* life, Surrey 65; their time *most happy* is, *ib.* Upon a lowly asse *more white* than snow, Yet she much *whiter*, Spenser *FQ.* I 4. *wantonest*, W. Webbe 41; In his *most wanton* Bookes, *ib.* 44. *delicatest*, Lyly *Euph.* 35; the *most delycate*, *ib.* 39. *slenderer*, Puttenham 114; *more slender*, *ib.* 108. *honourablest*, Bacon 14; the *most honourable*, *ib.* 34.

§ 32. Sometimes a combination of the two modes in one phrase occurs, even when the positives are of the same length.

The *truest* and *moste apte*, Elyot II 440. *laufuller* and *more honest*, Northbrooke 40. to the *lowest* and *most base*, Puttenham 92. No she is *wilder* and *more hard* withal, Kyd *Sp. Trag.* 44.

In cases where the positives are the same, the second comparative is always terminational: *more hard* than *hardest* flint, Watson 99.

§ 33. The chief points in which sixteenth century usage differs from modern usage seem, in general, to be these: (1) The greater freedom in the use of *more* and *most* with monosyllables. (2) The greater freedom in the use of *more* and *most* with dissyllables in *-y* and *-le* and *-er*. (3) The greater freedom in the addition of *-er* and *-est* to trisyllables and quadrisyllables. Other differences lie in the usage of special comparative forms and constructions. Many have developed special meaning. Others have been lost or altered. A survey of these is perhaps more important than a survey of the modes of comparison in general.

III. The Comparison of Participles.

1. Terminational Mode.

§ 34. The addition of *-er* and *est* to participial forms, as in Nash's *movingest*, Thomas Heywood's *lovingest*, and Shakespeare's *curseder*, *damnedest*, is scarcely found until the seventeenth century. It is noteworthy that terminational comparison of participles appears so late. Such forms are frequent with Shakespeare (Franz § 62 c), and continue common after the seventeenth century. That they are not normal comparatives is shown by Gill's testimony in 1621, v. § 5. (But compare Ben Jonson's *learneder*, *learnedest*, 1640.) *Cunning* and *willing* show terminational comparison, but with these the participial origin is probably lost sight of.

1) Thei were *conynger* then 1, *Respublica* 354, 26. *cunninger* and *rycher*, *Ascham Tox.* 91. the *cunninger* workman, *ib. Schol.* 143. the *cunni[n]gest* Master, *ib.* 121. who should be counted *cunningest*, *Puttenham* 53. our *cunning'st* Englishman, *Peele E. I* 379. and *willinger* you shall find him, *Lyly EE.* 377. *willinger* to dress up their house than their heads, *ib.* 475.

2) *curstest*, *Heywood Love* 171. *oldest* and *learnedst* time, *Ascham Schol.* 147. the *highest* and *most learnedst* toppe of true *Poetrie*, *W. Webbe* 18. the *curstest* quean, *Peele OWT.* 453.

2. The Periphrastic Mode.

§ 35. The normal comparison of participial forms in the fifteenth and the sixteenth century is by *more* and *most*, as now.

1) *more filching*, *Gammer Gurton's Needle* 240. *more searching* eye, *Greene J. IV* 200. *more alluring*, *Peele AP.* 54. the *moost briberyng* thefe, *R. and B.* 137. *most ragyng* yre, *Wyatt TM.* 54. *mooste tender* and *louyng* mother, *More Utop.* 99. *moste flourishing*, *ib.* 132. *most dissembling* wretch, *Lyly Euph.* 88. *most flowing*, *Puttenham* 129. *more cunning*, *Spenser Shep. Cal. XII* 7. *more cunning*, *Puttenham* 102. *most cunnyng*, *More Utop.* 47. *more willing*, *Ascham Schol.* 19. *most willing*, *Lyly EE.* 285.

2) *more preysed* and *renoumed*, *Morte D.* 394, 21. *more beholding* (a corruption of *beholden*), *G. of W. Caius MS.* 19, 299; *Lyly EE.* 221. *more assured*, *Elyot II* 108. *more afraid*, *Lyly EE.* 189. *more amaz'd*, *Spenser FQ. VI* 10. *most preysed*, *Morte D.* 316, 13. *most beholdyng*, *ib.* 42, 24; 246, 2. *most proued* knyghtes, *ib.* 345, 10. *most beholddyn*, *Digby Mysteries* 80, 658. *most desired* joy, *PL. LVI* 44.

moste blessed conspiracy, Elyot II 207. *most sharpest witted* and excellent lerned, ib. 59. *most assured* frende, Udall RD. 65. *most accustomed*, Northbrooke 133. *most bounden*, Lyly Euph. 204. *moste learned* men, W. Webbe 91. *most learnedst*, ib. 18. *most accurs'd*, Marlowe Tamb. I 35. *most eleuate* or shrillest, Puttenham 92. *most blessed*, Nash UT. 50. *most burning sighted* bird, ib. 122.

3. *Better* and *Best* with Participles.

§ 36. *Better* and *best* are found sometimes with past participles instead of *more* and *most*, a usage less common at present (§ 49).

Better lerned than a greate sight of vs, Latimer S. 67. the *best lerned* doctor, Lever 88. My *best-beloved* lord, Peele BA. 423.

IV. Irregular Comparison

1. Survival of Umlaut.

§ 37. Umlaut comparison survives in *strenger*, *strongest*, *lenger*, *lengest*, *elder*, *eldest*, beside *stronger*, *strongest*, *longer*, *longest*, and *older*, *oldest*, the latter being new forms built upon the positives. In OE. the forms were *long*, *lengra*, *lengest*, *strong*, *strengra*, *strengest*, and *eald*, *ieldra*, *ieldest* (dialectal *eldra*, *eldest*).

§ 38. The umlauted forms of *strong* are the first to disappear. Even in OE. the superlative *strongest* occurs (Sievers § 310). Hence, and because the word was less frequently used, the earlier generalization of the vowel of the positive.

1) *Strenger*, *strengest*: *strengest* knyghte, Morte D. 313, 4. *strengest* knyghtes, ib. 478, 11. *strengest* wyn, ib. 653, 24. *strengest* castel, ib. 827, 17. (But, *strongest* champyon, ib. 649, 32. *stronger* and *stronger*, ib. 142, 33.) *strenger*, PL. *strengar*, Nature 91, 552.

Later instances of *strenger* and *strengest* were not found.

2) The Northern forms are unumlauted *stranger*, *strangest*, *strangest*, York Pl. 327, 215. Fortune is most and *strangest*: Kingis Quair 37, 149. the *strangest* Sampson, Douglas I 75, 25.

§ 39. The umlauted forms of *long* persist into the middle of the sixteenth century. In the last quarter of the century they have practically disappeared. *Lenger* and *lengest* in the Faerie Queene are archaisms. They do not appear in Shakespeare.

1) *Lenger*, *lengest*: no *lenger* delays, Morte D. 355, 8. *lengar* delay, Digby Mysteries 69, 406. *lenger* respite, Everyman 103. (*longer* respite, ib. 135.) *lenger* time, Surrey TM. 50; Sackville Gorb. 136. *lenger* life, TM. 132. *lenger* partes, ib. 141. *lenger* life, Spenser FQ. IX 43. the *lengest* days, Elyot II 146. *lengest* time, TM. 189.

2) The Northern forms are unumlauted *langer*, *langest*: *langer*, Douglas II 221, 15; James VI 55. *langest*, ib. 60.

§ 40. By the end of the sixteenth century the umlauted forms of *old* are used, as now, as attributes without *than*, chiefly of people, to distinguish relationship. *Elder* (Sweet, N. Eng. Gr. § 2084—94) is in meaning less the comparative of *old* than the opposite of *younger*. Earlier, as in the Paston Letters, and the Morte Darthur (v. Blume, Die Sprache der Paston Letters; Baldwin, Inflections and Syntax of the Morte Darthur, § 35) *older* and *elder* alternate without much distinction. Even with Shakespeare the modern distinction is not always carried out (Franz § 70).

Elder, eldest, persisted into modern English beside *older, oldest*, developing special meaning while *strenger, strengest* and *lenger, lengest* were crowded out. *Elder, eldest* were probably protected by more frequent use, perhaps also by the influence of the cognate noun *eld*. Similarly, *utter* remains beside *outer*, § 60.

1) *Elder, eldest*: He loved a gentilwoman a grete dele *elder* than I, Morte D. 673, 23. I am *elder* brother, PL. CCXLVI 198. Your son John the *elder*, ib. CCXXI 174. By your *older* son, John Paston, ib. CXXVI 97. But we tway bene men of *elder* witt, Spenser, Shep. Cal. II 35. Then as the spring gives place to *elder* time, ib. XII 73. the *elder* sister, Lyly EE. 451. and in his *elder* yeres, Lodge 49. thy *elder* brother's worth, Marlowe Tamb. II 47. Horatio, thou art *older* than thy father, Kyd Sp. Trag. 131. (Editions of 1618, '23, '33 have *elder*.) I wyl haue the *eldest* damoyssel, Morte D. 149, 28—29. Master Paston the *eldest* PL. CCXIV 167. *eldest* daughter, Gascoigne Phil. 92. *eldest* dame, ib. 109. *eldest* son, Marlowe Tamb. I 18. *eldest* brother, Nash UT. 204.

2) The unlauted forms are used sometimes in the sense of *ancient, former*: One of the *eldeste* poetes of Greece, Elyot II 359. Albeit that in *elder* tymes, Spenser Shep. Cal. Gen. Arg. 12.

For the use of *elder* and *eldest* as substantives, v. §§ 85. 86.

2. Comparatives and Superlatives with Consonant Doubling.

§ 41. Forms with consonant doubling in the comparative and superlative are common in the early part

of the fifteenth century, dying out at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth. Such forms are frequent in OE., especially in LWS., and in the thirteenth century they appear in all dialects (v. Brück's dissertation). The cause of the doubling is the *-r* of the comparative ending, which occasioned doubling in late OE, even after long vowels: *blæddre*, *attor*, *hluttur*, *moddor*, etc. Sievers § 229. Later, the doubling of the consonant caused shortening of the vowel, as in Chaucer's *dēp*, *depper*, *grēt*, *gretter* (Sweet, History of English Sounds §§ 410.632). Mätzner, 291, finds the explanation of the gemination in an *-i-* or *-j-* in the adjective ending; but, as seen in the examples just cited, the doubling occurs as frequently in other words as in comparatives, words in which no *-j-* was ever present. The phenomenon of consonant doubling in comparison is often called 'vowel shortening', a less exact designation, because in the case of *latter*, OE. and ME. have a short vowel in the positive (OE. *læt*) as well as in the comparative and superlative. This is pointed out by Brück.

Originally the doubling belonged only to the comparative, but was soon transferred to the superlative by analogy, often also to the positive, as in the fifteenth century forms *swett* and *grett*.

swettest, Morte D. 859, 12. *gretter*, ib. 38, 8. *grettest*, ib. 468, 14. *derrest*, York Pl. 282, 280; ib. 486, 199. *swetter*, ib. 424, 89. *gretter*, Bl. and Eg. 184, 36; (but *gretest*, 66, 10 etc.). *gretter*, G. of W. 2594; ib. 8609. *depppest*, Caxton Reynard the Fox. 94, 30. *fynnest*, Digby Mysteries 73, 484. *swetter*, ib. 58, 94. *grettest*, ib. 60, 165. *swetter*, (rhyming with *better*) Skelton I 102. *swetter*, Heywood Wether 246, 934. *gretter*, ib. 248, 983. *greatter*, Bale Three L. 57. *gretter*,

ib. KJ. 56. *gretter*, R. and B. 77. *greatter*, Elyot II 43, 180. *greatest*, ib. I 118; II 253. *greatter*, Ancient Ballads 217. For had his wesand bene a little *widder*, Spenser Shep. Cal. IX 210.

Spenser's *widder* is the latest case noted. Henry Machyn (1550—63) writes *grett*, *gretter*, *grettest*, also *swett*, but this has little significance, since he doubles almost all *t*'s: *fett*, 220. *whytt*, 298. *owtter*, 257.

§ 42. Traces of consonant doubling remain in *latter* § 55 and *utter* § 58. In other adjectives, as *great*, *sweet*, *deep*, *dear*, the doubling was lost in later English, through the influence of the positive.

3. Comparative Combination of heterogeneous Words.

§ 43. In a small group of words, the comparative and superlative are not from the same root as the positive. So in OE are compared *micel*, *gōd*, *yfel*, and *lȳtel*. It is often said that the comparison of these words is 'defective'. It is not so much defective as complementary, or supplementary, the place of the regular comparatives being supplied by heterogeneous words, related in meaning and so completing and assisting one another, although etymologically unrelated. Cf. on this point Osthoff, *Vom Suppletivwesen der indogermanischen Sprachen*. Erweiterte akademische Rede. Heidelberg 1900. In each case the comparative suffixes are Teut. *-izan*, *-ista-*. These cause umlaut of the root vowel except in *māra* (*ma* + *izan*) where *-ai-* blends to a diphthong.

a) *Much*, *More*, *Most*.

§ 44. *Much* (<OE. *micel* + Scand. *mjök*) has the comparatives *more* (OE. *māra*) and *moe* (OE. *mā*, Mercian *mæ*).

and the superlative *most* (OE. *mǣst*, in Mercian unumlauted, *māst*). Teut. stem *ma-*. In later English *much* was supplanted in the positive by the adjectives *great* and *large*. The vowel in *most* is probably not due to the influence of *more* and *moe* on the WS. *mǣst*. *Most* is, rather to be derived from the Mercian form, giving ME. *māst*, *mōst*, beside *mēst* from *mǣst*. Of the two comparatives *more* and *moe*, *more* is used of quantity, size etc., and *moe* of number. Gill, 1619, makes *mo* the comparative of *many*, and *more* the comparative of *much*.

Variants are *moch*, *mich*, *moueh*, *mochel*, *mueil*, *mekell*, *meikell*, *mekle*; -*morr*, *mor*, *moir*, *mair*, *mo*, *moe*, *moo*; -*mestr*, *maist*, *moost*, *moste*, *mooste*, etc. Of these, the Northern *mickle* and the Southern *mochel*, and the Northern *mai*, and *maist*, survive at the end of the sixteenth century.

1) Positives: *moche*, Morte D. 213, 31; Bl. and Eg. 63, 7: 16, 9; G. of W. 1767. *mouche*, Nature 80, 181. *mueil*, Pride of Life 4, 37. *mochel*, Spenser Shep. Cal. II 109. *mich*, Kingis Quair 37, 50; Douglas II 61, 20. *miche*, G. of W. Auchinleek MS. 12, 189. *myche*, Mankind 46, 194. *mykel* anger, Morte D. 371, 22. *mekyll* boste, G. of W. 1522. *mikell*, ib. Caius MS. 11, 161. *mekill*, Douglas, 51, 1. *mekle* host, ib. 93, 8. *meikill* mervale ib. 114, 3. *mickle*, Spenser Shep. Cal. VII 16. *mickle*, Peele MP. 557; 563; Greene J. IV. 190 etc. For *mickle* in Shakespeare cf. Franz § 68.

2) Comparatives: *morr* beholdyng, Morte D. 640, 11. *mor* glad, Digby Mysteries 208, 1089; 179, 227. *mor tolerabill*, ib. 212, 1218. *moir*, Douglas I 13, 11. *mair*, ib. 48, 7. *mare*, G. of W. 3550; Wright's Chaste Wife 321; Digby Mysteries 116, 742. *mair*, James VI 45.

3) The comparative *mo*: *moo* knyghtes, Morte D. 507, 18. *mo* angellys, ib. 869, 5. *wythout moo* wordes,

Bl. and Eg. 28, 3. *mo* examples, Nature 147, 106. The *mo* there be, such as is She, *More* should be gods thank for his grace, TM. 250. infinit *mo*, Ascham Tox. 131. *moe* words, ib. Schol. 16. *mo*, More Utop. 58. no *mo* quarels, Udall RD. 85. *moe* sillables, Gascoigne 34. a many *mo*, Peele AP. 19. *mo* and *more* excellent examples, Puttenham 55.

Mo is often used with a superfluous *other*: and infinite *other mo* lettes, Ascham Tox. 27. and many *other* like thinges, ib. 30. It occurs frequently in the collocation *withouten mo*: *withoutyne moo*, York Pl. 179, 34. *withouten more*, Wyatt TM. 92. (So *more*: *wythoutyn more* forthe they rode, G. of W. 719. Cf. Zupitza's note, p. 358. *withouten more* = 'without more ado'.)

Sometimes *mo* follows the substantive: and many wayes *moo*, Ascham Tox. 162. other goodes *mo*, Lever 32.

4. Superlatives: Of myrthys ye schull haue þe *meest*, G. of W. 10639. *mast* of myght, York Pl. III, 283. Cf. also *formast*, ib. 1, 4. *althirmast*, ib. 110. 270. *maist* gudlie, Douglas I 61, 18. *maist* gudliest, ib. I 45, 5. Lufe *maist* thy God, Ballad of Good Counsel 1, 6 (in other versions, *most*). The *maist* part, James VI 64.

§ 45. *Much*, *more*, *most* are used frequently in the sense of *great*, *strong*, *large*, etc., *much* disappearing earliest in this sense. This usage of the comparatives is common in OE.: *heal-ærna mæst*, Beowulf 78. *maran . . . eorla*, ib. 247. It is found sometimes in present English: This last loss, of all the *most*, Byron, Prisoner of Chillon 201.

1) *Much*: this *moche* yong man, Morte D. 213, 31. with *moche* ooste, G. of W. 1767. with *moche* gaine, ib. 2675.

2) *More*: a *more* myght, Morte D. 298, 3. *more* of prowess, ib. 80, 27. In all þat lande there was not a

more felon, G. of W. 2632. the *more* parte of his reigne, Elyot I 259. the stronger or of *more* mighte, ib. II 4. the *more* parte of the worlde, ib. II 57. a much *more* wondre, Bale Three L. 68. Under hevyn is not a *more* knave in condycyon, ib. KJ. 32. a farre *more* couetousness, Lever 37. a *mor* som, Henslowe 107. a *more* sweetnesse, Puttenham 131.

3) *Most*: the *moost* coward and the vylaynst kyng and knyght, Morte D. 450, 18. the fayrest lady and *moost* of beaute in the world, ib. 357, 23. The *moost* wretche of the world, ib. 639, 37. The *moost* schrewe of all þe crye, G. of W. 2850. Fortune is *most* and strangest, Kingis Quair 37, 149. The *moste* knave, Bale KJ. 102. *moste* parte of people do wene, R. and B. 131. My *most* desire, Wyatt TM. 64. Nor call the lyon of coward beastes the *most*, ib. 89. My *most* desire, TM. 169. My *most* will, ib. 260. The *most* occasyon, Lever 98. The *most* misfortunes, Googe 126. The *moste* loute and dastarde, Udall RD. 66. To victours *most* despight, Spenser FQ. IX 11. In *most* necessitie, ib. X 43.

Note. In the fifteenth century, *much* is also used adverbially (= very): *moche* necessarye for to enstruete . . . smale and grete, Caxton En. 10, 15. ryght *moche* agreable and pleasant, Bl. and Eg. 16, 9. a virtue *moche* commendable, Elyot II 288.

b. *Better, Best.*

§ 46. Good shows the comparative and superlative *better* and *best*, from OE. *betera* and *betst(a)*, more rarely *betesta*. Teut. stem **bat-*. The dropping of the *-t-* in the modern *best* may be due to the influence of *most* and *least*; or to the assimilation of *t* to *s*; or to both combined. Cf. OE. *latst* > *last*, § 55, and *grettest* > ME. *grest*.

bettir grace, York Pl. 133, 210. *better* part, Douglas I 108, 4. *better*, Puttenham 170. *beste* maner, York Pl. 207, 219. *best* and worst, Bl. and Eg. 48, 16. *best* oratour, Lever 88. *best*, More Utop. 92. *best* wine, Lyly Euph. 408.

§ 47. The form *bet*, properly an adverb (OE. *bet*, Teut. **batiz*), occurs beside *better* in the comparative, being used sometimes as an adjective.

And when the wretch, I cannot terme him *bet*, Gascoigne St. Gl. 52. And lerne *bet* to preche, The Pride of Life 32, 449—50. Yet *bet* with humble heart thy frailty to confess, Surrey Poems 95. But shall be *bett* in time, Spenser Shep. Cal. VII 230 (v. Herford's note).

§ 48. *Better* and *'best* are occasionally emphasized by double comparison, § 69.

More fayrer, holier, and *more better*, Morte D. 825, 35—36. as seemed *most best* for them, ib. 181, 19. my power is *most best*, York Pl. 249, 206. mine owne *most best*, TM. 234. *more better*, Shakespeare Tempest 1, 2.

§ 49. *Better* and *best* are used occasionally in the place of *more* and *most* to form the degrees of comparison of adjectives. This is found sometimes with past participles, § 36.

Thow art *better* worthy to haue myne hors than I, Morte D. 535, 2. Moche *better* he seemed to be a man of the fayre than a creature of the worlde, Bl. and Eg. 63. 7.

The use of *better* and *best* in the expressions *if it be better cheap at London* PL. CCCXVII, and *best cheap*, ib. CXIII, is accounted for by the fact that *cheap* is yet a noun (OE. *cēap*, 'purchase').

c) *Bad (Evil, Ill), Worse, Worst.*

§ 50. In OE. the forms were *yfel*, *wiersa* (<*wierssa for *wiersra) *wierresta*, *wiersta* (<*wirzista). According to Sweet, the modern English *evil* comes from the Kentish. This seems doubtful, since the ME. vowel should be *e* not *ɛ*. Cf. Luick §§ 534, 600, who suggests Northumbrian instead of Kentish. In ME. *ill* from the Scandinavian *illr* came into use beside *evil*. Later the new adjective *bad*, ME. *badde*, of uncertain etymology (derived by Zupitza by change of meaning and shortening from the OE. noun *bæddel*, 'effeminate person', v. N. Eng. Dict. *bad*) displaced both *evil* and *ill* in the positive.

Variants in the comparative and superlative are *wers*, *wurs*, *werse*, *worsse*, *warse*, *werre*, *warre*, *war*, *warre*; *werste*, *wurst*, etc. Of these the -a- forms are northern. The vowel variation is due to the influence of the initial *w* (*wurs* etc.) or of the *r* (*werre*, *warre* etc.). In the forms with double *r*; the *s* of the OE. *wiersa* has been assimilated.

For the double comparative *worser* beside *worse*, v. § 70.

1) *Evil*: Myn *euyll* wylle, Morte D. 359, 3. *euyll* chere, Wright's Chaste Wife 196, 6. *euyll* (rhyming with *stille*), York Pl. 127, 26. *Euyll* estate, G. of W. 4424. *euyll* chere, ib. 4648. *euyll* chaunce, ib. 4944. *euyll* wounde, ib. 5178. he felyd hym *euyll*, ib. 5048. in more *euyll* waye, Bl. and Eg. 80, 23. howe *euill*, Elyot II 294. *euill* purpose, ib. 310. *euil* lawes, Latimer S. 97. *euyll* to worse, ib. 121. from *euyll* to worse, Lever 32.

2) *Ill*: Gud or *ill*, York Pl. 129, 96. goode and *ill*, ib. 133, 195. *ille*, ib. 140, 68. more *ill*, ib. 196, 82. myche *yll*, Mankind 46, 194. what thing is good or *yll*, Republica

327, 60. an *yll* one, ib. 350, 60. his mother *most yll*, Horestes 494, 26. chance *most yll*, ib. 523, 785. never so *ill*, Lyly EE. 6, 206. nor wish me any *ill*, Puttenham 195.

3) *Bad*: if my wife be *badde*, Wright's Chaste Wife 2668. good and *bad*, Latimer S. 179. a *badde* diner, More Utop. 93. too, too *badde*, Gascoigne St. Gl. 54. both beeing so *bad*, it is hard to iudge which is the worste, Lyly EE. 215. *bad* counsell, Puttenham 183.

4) Comparatives: who had the *werre*, Morte D. 62, 8. Arthur's knightes . . . put kyng lot & his hoost to the *werre*, ib. 87, 30. he hath put hem to the *wers*, ib. 147, 38. the *wers* knightes, ib. 356, 9. *werse*, ib. 461, 1; 506, 14 etc. *werre*, York Pl. 85, 292; 296, 108. it will waxe *werre*, ib. 303, 317. *werse*, ib. 305, 1. *warr* and *warr*, ib. 436, 98. *worse* than any Jewe, ib. 390, 320. þe *warse* syde, G of W. 3536. the *warse* had the Lumbardes, ib. 4992. the *warse*, ib. 11073. *worse* parte, ib. 602. If we fyght, we gete the *worre*, ib. 5214. *wers*, Douglas III 42, 32. *war* and *war*, ib. 173, 25. *wers*, Kingis Quair 24, 95. farre *wars*, Heywood Love 162, 50. in mouche *wurs* case, Nature 80, 181. *worse*, ib. 84, 339. *wers* þen bestes, Mankind 45, 156. yea, and thates *worsse*, Horestes 533, 1070.

The northern *warre* appears as late as Spenser Shep. Cal. IX 108: They sayne the world is much *war* than it wont.

5) Superlatives: the *werst* of them, Morte D., ib. 439, 17. Do thou thy *werst*, ib. 839, 37. the *werste* is paste, York Pl. 356, 212. the *best* and the *worst* that he could, Bl. and Eg. 48, 16. He ys *worst* of þem all, Mankind 49, 293. *wurst* of all, Nature 142, 872. *worst*, Horestes 507, 385.

§ 51. *Bad* is also compared regularly: *bad*, *badder* *baddest*. *Badder* is found as early as the Canterbury

Tales (v. N. Eng. Dict. *bad*). Shakespeare uses only *worse* and *worst* as the comparatives of *bad*. In present English *badder* and *baddest* are dialectal only: a deal *badder*, Dickens, Martin Chuzzlewit, (quoted by Franz).

A *badder* match cannot betide, TM. 212. and were it *badder* it is not the worst, Lyly Euph. 208. *badder* chance, Misfortunes of Arthur 331. So fine gloses amend the *baddest* fancies, Watson, Ded. Ep. 30.

d) *Little, Less, Least.*

§ 52. Little, <OE. *lȳtel*, shows the comparatives *less* (*lesser*). *lasse* <OE. *lāssa* <**lāsra*, ME. *lesse*, *lasse*, and the superlatives *leste*, *least*, etc. <OE. *lāsta*, more rarely, *lārest(a)*. Teut. stems **lais*, **laiz*.

For the double comparative *lesser* beside *less* cf. § 70.

1) *Lesse, lasse*: Atte hole *lesse* or mare, Wright's Chaste Wife 321. For lytull he etyth and *lasse* drinketh, G. of W. 10793. more and *lesse*, ib. 6300. She desireth no *lasse*, Gismond 564, 25. no *lesse*, ib. 565, 58.

Lasse appears as late as Elyot, being with him the normal form: *lasse* grutch, I 27. *lasse* payne, II 316.

2) *Less* is used sometimes for *fewer*: there was none of them both that had *lusse* wounds than XV., Morte D. 591, 20. And never fare the worse in his household, nor [have] the *less* men about him. PL. LV 43. never truer faith preached and *less* workes done, Northbrooke 181.

3) *Least* is used, as now, as adjective or substantive: at the *lest*, Morte D. 342, 29. mooste and *leeste*, G. of W. 211. in *leste* estimation, Elyot II 438. the *least* devil, Four PP. 377. the *least* childe, Gosson 63. Hee prayde the gods from highest to the *least*, Watson 108. the *least* devil, Four PP. 377. — The modern *at least* (dialectal

leastways) is represented by *at leeste*, Ascham Tox. *at least waies*, Puttenham 154. *at least wayes*, ib. 194. *at the lest*, Elyot II 285, etc.

§ 53. *Less* and *least* are used as the counterparts of *more* and *most*, forming a sort of periphrastic comparison to indicate a less degree, diminution, and so on. For this no language has terminational or organic comparison; although, except for the frequency of use because of the tendency of the mind to magnify rather than to decrease, there is no reason there should not be descending terminational comparison, beside terminational comparison to denote a greater degree, or increase.

Less courage, Ascham Tox. 25. both *lesse* charge and more pleasure, ib. 121. And they which had *leaste* hope in latin haue bene *most* boulde in englyshe, ib. 18.

§ 54. Cases of the new comparatives *littler* and *littlest*, regularly formed from *little*, were not found. Shakespeare uses *littlest* (Franz § 71), and they are common in present English.

4. Twofold Comparison of *Late* and *Out*.

a) *Late*.

§ 55. *Late* < OE. *læt*, has the historical comparatives *latter* < OE. *lætra* and *last* < OE. *latosta*, beside *lætemest(u)*. For *latter*, with doubling of the *t*, cf. §§ 41—2 and *utter*, § 58. The shortening of the OE. *latost* to *last*, may be due to the analogy of *most*, *best*, *least*, from OE. monosyllabic superlatives; or to the assimilation of the *t*; or to both combined. Compare *best* < *betsta*, § 46. Beside *latter* and *last*, arose in ME. the new comparatives *later* and *latest*, remade from the positive *late*. *Latter* and

later, *last* and *latest* were used side by side for a while without much distinction. Then the old forms lost something of the sense of the OE. *læt*, 'slow', and came to represent not 'time' so much as 'order' *Latter* is used as the opposite of *former*, *last* of *first*, the words occurring customarily in these pairs; but this distinction between the older and newer comparatives is not always carried out. There is confusion as late as Spenser and Shakespeare. (Gunther, Edmund Spenser's Syntaktische Eigentümlichkeit. Franz § 66.)

1) *Latter*: His *lattar* deede is more to drede, York Pl. 403, 139. Sirs, with hir haue I spoken | *Lattar* panne yee, ib. 488, 243. which if it were so as God defend, might cause a *latter* error worse than the first, PL. XXXVI. 26. In the *latter* days from the truth of God should fall, Bale Three L. 66. your *latter* reason, Heywood Love 166, 168. The glorie of your *latter* age, Norton Gorb. 129. When fame shall blaze these acts in *latter* years, Misfortunes of Arthur 325. the *latter* of the twaine, Watson 99. yet they give to the poore neuertheless, and paye their dutie to the prince neuer the *latter*, Northbrooke 125. your *latter* obiection, Lyly EE. 399.

2) *Later*: and in the *later* ende of the prayer he sayeth, Elyot II 359. what shall I pass my *later* dayes in paine, Gismond 594, 13. Then shall you leese the rewarde of your former diligence and be dam[p]ned for your *later* negligence, Lever 58. of your *later* fight, Spenser FQ. I 32. of the *later* sort I thinke thus, Puttenham 77. and yet the first seemes shorter than the *later*, ib. 85. the two *later* sillables, ib. 87.

3) *Last*: at the *laste*, Morte D. 328, 29. at the *last*, Bl. and Eg. 80, 1. *last* and longest rest, Gismond 571, 56.

your *last* endynge, Latimer S. .20. in the *last* days, Northbrooke 182. of the *last* kinde, W. Webbe 90. this *last* sort, Puttenham 39.

4) *Latest*: thy *latest* fine (= 'last end'), Common Conditions 630, 901. rise erliest and come *latest* home, Ascham Tex. 27. the *latest* honor due it, Marlowe Ed. II 213. the payment of my *latest* years, ib. Faust 96. my *latest* memrory, ib. Tamb. II 52. Now, eyes, enjoy your *latest* benefit, ib. 73. So glean the *latest* blossom of my life, Peele Ed. I 412. These are thy *latest* days, ib. OWT. 457. with thy *latest* gasp, ib. DB. 479.

§ 56. The comparative *latter* is used in certain stock phrases for the superlative, a usage which survives in present English: *latter hour*, *latter days*, etc. Compare *utter*, § 59.

In all my life, to this my *latter* day, Gismond 589, 17, Thou echo shrill, that haunt'st the hollow hills | Leave off that wont to snatch the *latter* word, Misfortunes of Arthur 317. who was the first inventor and diuisor of this *latter* kinde of dauncing (of three kinds), Northbrooke 146. in the *latter* days shall come perillous times, ib. 182. the *latter* end is worse with you than the beginning, ib. 183. Not for my life do I desire this pause: | But in my *latter* hour to purge myself, Marlowe The Massacre 233.

Once *later* is so used: My *later* (=last) houre approacheth loe, Gismond 557, 44.

§ 57. *Latter* and *last* maintained themselves beside *later* and *latest*, as *utter* beside *outer*, and *elder* beside *older*, because of the development of special meaning, and because of the difference in the vowel sounds, §§ 40, 60.

b) *Out*.

§ 58. The forms in OE. were [*ūte*, adv. 'outside'] *ȳterra*, *ȳt(e)mest(a)*, or, with extension of the positive, *ūterra*, *ūt(e)mest(a)*. The ME. *utter* arises from *ūterra* through shortening of the vowel owing to the doubling of the consonant, § 41. *Outer* is a new comparative from *out*. In the superlative occur *uttrest*, *utmost*, and *uttermost*, beside *outmost* and *outermost*. A form **outest* is not found. The double superlatives with *-most* spring from original *-m-*superlatives, seen, uncompounded, only in *forma*, *meduma*, *hinduma*. Even in OE. the *-m-* forms generally took a second superlative ending, the more common *-est*, giving *ymest*, *-emest*, or *-mest*, (cf. *innemest*, *utemest*, *niðemest*, *midmest*, *fyrmost*, beside *meduma*, *forma*, etc.), which, becoming associated with *most*, were finally supplanted by the latter. In the forms *uttermost*, and *outermost*, this double superlative ending *-most* is added to comparatives, §§ 1, 68.

1) Comparatives: in a large *vtter* room, Puttenham 65 the *owtter* court, Machyn 257.

2) Superlatives: The *vttrest* Ethiopian folk with feruent beams doth frye, Grimald TM. 105. — *utmost* gasp, Misfortunes of Arthur 336. our *utmost* service, Marlowe Tamb. I 15. *vtmost* strength, Nash UT. 20. *utmost* dart, Spenser FQ. VII 25. — batail to the *vttermest*, Morte D. 128, 22. *vttiremeste*, York Pl. 386, 232. to the *uttermoste*, Elyot II 290. to the *uttermoste*, Latimer S. 202. to the *vttermost*, Nature 85, 347. *uttermost* parts of China, Hakluyt 57. *uttermost*, Heywood Wether 237, 682. *vttermost* bound, Puttenham 117. — *most utter* is found for *uttermost* in: to his *most utter* dampnacyon, Bale Three L. 44.

Lo, here the last and *outmost* work for blades, Misfortunes of Arthur 310. From all the parts and *outmost* side, Puttenham 113. Chaucer uses the form *outerest*, Trans. of Boethius 1470.

§ 59. *Utter* is used in certain stock phrases for the superlative, or as a new positive in the sense of 'complete' or 'total', the feeling of connection with *out* being largely lost. Cf. the use of *latter* for the superlative, § 56.

utter undoing, PL. CXIX 32. *vtter* dampnacyon, Bale Three L. 44. *vtter* destrucyon, Lever 35. *vtter* enimes of virtue, Gosson 20. *utter* ruin, Marlowe Tamb. I 28.

§ 60. *Utter* retained its place beside *outer*, not being crowded out like *gretter*, *depper*, and the other comparatives with consonant doubling, except *latter*. This was because with *out*, *utter*, as with *late*, *latter*, the difference in the vowel sounds was greater than with *great*, *gretter*, *deep*, *depper*, and because of association with cognate words like *utter*, *utterance*, etc. (Brück, p. 48.) Further *utter* had developed special meaning, distinguishing it from *outer*, as *latter* beside *later*, and *elder* beside *older*. The feeling that it is a comparative of *out* was lost sight of, which made possible the new superlatives *uttrest* and *uttermost*, formed from *utter* as though it were a positive. Compare *nearest* from *near*, § 62.

5. Comparatives formed from adverbial Positives.

§ 61. A few comparatives in OE. are built from adverbial positives. Of these *nēarra* and *fierra* are the most important, and show interesting further development. Of *ǣr* 'early', *ǣrra*, *ǣrest(a)*, only the adverbs *ere* (Shak. *ore*, *or*) and *erst* remain, though in OE. *ǣrra* and *ǣresta* were adjectives. Among the *-most* superlatives, OE. *innera*,

innemest, *uferra*, *yfemest*, etc., formed from the adverbs *inne*, *ufan*, etc., are treated in § 68. *ūterra*, *ūtemesta*, 'outer' and 'outmost', from the adverb *ūte* 'without', have been treated in § 58. For *fore*, adverb 'before', comparative *furþra*, superlatives *fyrsta*, *forma*, *fyrmost(a)*, cf. § 67.

a) *Near*.

§ 62. The old comparison *nigh*, *near*, *next*, OE. *nēah* [adv. 'near'], *nēarra*, *nīehst* or *nīext*, is succeeded by *nigh*, *nigher*, *nighest*, and *near* (the original comparative moved into the positive), *nearer*, *nearest*. *Nigher* and *nighest* are new formations built on the positive *nigh*. *Nearer*, historically a double comparative (§ 70), and *nearest* are formations built upon *near* as a positive. *Nigh* is dialectal in present English, but in the sixteenth century and with Shakespeare is yet frequent.

Variants are late ME. *nerre*, *narre*, *nere*, *nare*, etc., derived from the old weak comparative OE. *nēarra*, § 17. *Nigh* and *near* are also compared periphrastically.

1) *Nigh*, *nigher*, *nighest*, *more* and *most nigh*: *nygh blanchardyn*, Bl. and Eg. 33, 18. The *nier* my comfort is to me, Surrey TM. 24. *nigher* heven, Spenser Shep. Cal. VII 89. the *nighest* waye, More Utop. 34. *nigheste* together, ib. 74. they thought it *nighest*, ib. 94. *more nigh* mine heart, PL. CCLXXIX 31. that was *most nighe* to the sayde Paleys, Bl. and Eg. 112, 12. *most nyghe*, Elyot I 5. *most nighe*, ib. 51.

2) *Near* as comparative: *Near* occurs for *nearer* throughout the sixteenth century, but generally where the author seeks to represent colloquial or dialect speech: But wellaway! All was in vain, my nee'le is never the *near*, Gammer Gurton's Needle 184. and yet for all this

great ado, cham never the *near* my nee'le, ib. 251. bee of good chere now, and I warraunte thee come *ner*. | I nil come no *nerre*: cha not bee haled vp with slates, Republica 354, 7. and to gote lawe with this newe commer I shoud be near the *nerre*, Misogonus 484, 52. Well, cham ne'er the *near* vor my sheep, chawe sought it this vour mile, Clyomon and Clamydes 518.

Near is used as a comparative in Shakespeare, v. Franz and Schmidt.

3) *Nerre*, *narre* (the old weak form as comparative): It is neuere þe *nerre*, York Pl. 303, 321. *nerre* hur can he fare, G. of W. 4604. and then Syr Launcelot stode *nerre* Syr Gauwayn, Morte D. 838, 14. and tell him I wol come no *narre*, York Pl. 47, 62.

The northern form *narre* appears as late as Spenser: How be I am but rude and borrell, | Yet nearer ways I know. | To kerke the *narre*, from God more farre, | Has bene an old sayd sawe, Shep. Cal. VII 97.

4) *near*, *nearer*, *nearest*, *more* and *most near*: *nerre*, York Pl. 422, 34. *nerre*, G. of W. 846. Ye were aforetyme *nerer*, Morte D. 658, 19. *nearer* iustice, Norton Gorb. 105. *neerer* times, Sidney 60 with *nearest* vertue, TM. 89. *nearest* place, Sackville Gorb. 138. *neerest* way, Lyly EE 277; Googe 121. *neerest* to prieste, Bacon 149. *more nere* thy deth, Morte D. 70, 27. that ye should be *more nere* us, PL. CLI 116. *more nere* to the Inherytaunce, Berner's Froissart 86. *most nere* the order of the primitiue church, Lever 21. yet our auncient chroniclers . . . come *most neere* them, W. Webbe 45.

5) Double or intensified comparison: W. Webbe uses *more nearer*, which historically is triply a comparative: But a *more neerer* example, 46. cf. § 69.

§ 63. *Nearest* and *next*. The distinction is made, on the whole, as now, between *nearest*, the superlative denoting locality, and *next* the superlative denoting time or sequence; but it is not always observed, the connection between *next* and *near* being felt more than in present English. Even with Shakespeare *next* is sometimes used for *nearest*, Franz § 65. The contrary does not occur, *nearest* never being used of time or sequence.

1) *Next* denoting time or sequence: at the *next* feest of pentecost, Morte D. 158, 22. I will be *next* of your counsel, Bale Three L. 35. *next* vnto the things historicall, Puttenham 59. *next* night, ib. 67. The northern form is *nixt*: *nixt* after Pan, James VI 56. *nixt* hinmest, ib. 59.

2) *Next* denoting locality: and this same day haue me to the *next* chirche and fyrst lete me be clene confessed, Morte D. 611, 10. Which is the *nexte* waye to amendment, Ascham Tox. 36. *nixt* the chair, Douglas I 22, 13.

§ 64. Gascoigne coins the curious form *nexter* (on the analogy of *latter*, *former*), and the double superlative *next most*. Neither of these forms is found elsewhere.

Yet al that day, they fede in feare | . . . and in the *nexter* night, Phil. 111. His *next most* note (to note) | I neede no helpe at all, ib. 114.

b) *Far*.

§ 65. In OE. the forms are *feor*, adv. 'far', *fierra*, *fierrest*. In ME. they are *fer*, *ferre*, *ferrer*, *farre*, *farrar*, *ferrest*, etc. The forms *farder*, *farther*, *fardest*, *farthest*, are not early, but arose through confusion with the adverb *furþor*, and extension of the vowel of the positive. *Furþor* is the comparative of the OE. positive *fore*, 'be-

fore', superlatives *forma* and *fyrmost*. In Middle English it is also used as the comparative of the adverb *fer*, displacing the older *fierra*; and this helped the confusion with the adjective forms. *Furthest* is a new superlative from *furþor*. *Farther* and *farthest* are new forms based on the positive *far*.

The interchange of *th* and *d* orthographically in *furder*, *further*, *farder*, *farther*, etc. is the result of confusion of *d* and *th* before *r* in the sixteenth century, owing to the tendency of ME. *d*, preceded by a vowel and followed by *r* (*er*), to become *th*, as in *father*, *hither*, *together*, OE. *fæder*, *hider*, *togædre*, etc. Sweet, History of English Sounds § 931. Like *near*, *far* may also be compared periphrastically.

1) Positives: *ferre*, *farre*, *farr*, *far*, (OE. *feorr*, *feor*): *ferre*, Morte D. 847, 20. *ferre* and *nere*, York Pl. 422, 34. so *ferre*, Bl. and Eg. 30, 23. *ferre* and *nere*, G. of W. 846. *farre*, Lever 37. gone so *farre*, Lyly EE., 242. *farr* most cruel, Horestes 573, 110. *far*, Lyly Euph. 150.

Ferre is the normal form in the fifteenth century, *farre* in the sixteenth. The double consonant and the final vowel come from confusion with the comparative after the latter had lost its comparative force.

2) Comparatives: *ferre*, *farre* (OE. *feorra*, ME. *ferre*, *farre*), *farrar*, *furr*: his folke sall no *ferre*, York Pl. 87, 333. as the bright starr Seemeth ay greater when it is *farre*, Spenser Shep. Cal. IX 77. *Far* then Deucalion off, Shak. Winter's Tale, IV 423. (Folio of 1685; *farre* in 1623, '32, '63.) Franz § 67. — þat þei sall no *farrar* sprede, York Pl. 72, 2 (a new comparative made from *farre*). As I am a trwe gentleman | Shouldist near a gone *furr*, Misogonus 431, 17—18. (Brandl, 659, note on *furr*,

explains the form as a contraction of *fur[th]er*, and Shakespeare's *far*, *farre*, as contractions of *far[the]r*, *fur[the]r*, instead of as old weak comparatives.)

These forms are displaced by *ferther*, *further*, which already in the *Morte Darthur* are the normal comparatives, and by *farther*.

3) Superlative *ferrest*: *ferrest* occurs as late as Elyot, but is normally displaced by the new *furthest* and *farthest*. § 66: a vice moste ugly and *ferrest* from humanitie, Elyot II 55.

4) Periphrastic comparison of *far*: *more farre*, Spenser Shep. Cal. VII 97. a man *most farre* of from lamentynge and pytyng, Lever 21, etc.

§ 66. *Farther*, *farthest*, *further*, *furthest*: The distinction is made on the whole as now, between *farther*, *farthest*, and *further*, *furthest*, the former being used generally as the locality words; but exceptions are very common. So in Shakespeare (Franz § 67).

1) *Farther*, *farthest*, denoting locality: the *ferther* syde, *Morte D.* 220, 13. the *fardest* Thylee, *TM.* 224. *fardest* coasts, *Gascoigne St. Gl.* 71. the *fardest* pointe, *Ascham Schol.* 46. the *fardest* part of her domaine, *Puttenham* 112. in the *fardest* part of the Orient, *ib.* 119. in the *farthest* ende of my memorye, *Latimer S.* 133. *farthest* seas, *Norton Gorb.* 125. The *farthest* coast, *Gosson* 38. *farthest* Tartary, *Marlowe Tamb.* II 61. *farthest* point of Cathnesse, *Lyly EE.* 433.

2) *Farther*, *farthest*, denoting time or sequence: *ferther* payne, *Heywood Love* 164, 118. *farther* tryall, *ib.* 164, 98. *farther* newes, *Bale Three L.* 34. his *farther* end, *Sidney* 30. a *farther* passion, *Marlowe Tamb.* 20. *farther* perticulars, *Nash UT.* 83.

3) *Further*, *furthest*, denoting locality: in the *further* partes of hys Realme, Latimer S. 136. a *further* voyage, Puttenham 88. although he scourge the *furdest* for the nighest, Gascoigne Phil. 117. *furdest* West, Puttenham 192. the *furthest* part of all his spheare, ib. 111. the *furthest* continents, Marlowe Tamb. II 66. fetcht from *furthest* Ynde, Spenser FQ. V 3.

4) *Further*, *furthest*, denoting time or sequence: My *furder* meanyng, Gascoigne 32. *furder* meanes, Norton Gorb. 104. *further* dysquietynge, Lever 35. a *further* fight, TM. 216. *further* inconuenience, Watson 85. *further* perfection, Lyly Euph. 123. *further* liberty, Marlowe Tamb. II 45. no *further* use, Nash UT. 4.

Note. The substantives from *further*, *furtherer* and *furtherance*, occur frequently in the sixteenth century; *furtherer*, Lyly Euph. 87; W. Webbe 34, etc.; *furderance*, Ascham Tox. 14; *furtheraunce* Lyly Euph. 130.

6. Defective Comparison of *Former*, *Foremost*.

§ 67. *Former* is a new comparative made from the OE. superlative *forma* beside *fyrmost* (positive *fore*, 'before', comparative supplied by *furþra*, § 65). ME. examples are *formere fader*, Maund. 2. *formere* strengthe, Wyclif Judg. 16, 28 (cf. Mätzner's Wörterbuch). Compare the similar formation of the double comparative *nearer*, supra § 67. The superlative *fyrmost*, ME. *formest*, is modified to *foremost* § 68, -o- already in ME. being due to the influence of *forma* and *fore*. ME. *forme* < *forma* is crowded out by *foremost*. It does not appear after the fifteenth century.

Former and *foremost* remain in modern English without a positive.

1) Superlative *forme*: *forme ffadres* (=first parents), York Pl. 45, 14. *forme ffaders*, ib. 97, 110. For further examples v. Stratmann, ME. Dict., Mätzner, Wörterbuch II 178.

2) Comparative *former*: *former* times, Gismond 559, 47. *former* matter, Latimer S. 114. *former* life, Lyly Euph. 100. *former* beauties, Spenser FQ. II 38. *former* loving, ib. III 21. my *former* 'miss, Greene BB. 176. *former* times, Nash UT. 103. *former* example, Puttenham 141.

3) Superlatives *formest*, *formaste*, etc.: the *formest* prees, Morte D. 46, 32. he had the *formest*, Bl. and Eg. 162, 12. I am *formaste* and fyrste, York Pl. 1, 4. *formest*, Douglas 103, 12. and *formest* of all, Skelton I 388. *farre* before the *formost*, TM. 128. *formoste* of all, Ascham Tox. 13. the *formooste* finger, ib. 109. Euen so this byrde vppon that name | Hir *foremost* note replies, Gascoigne, Phil. 110. and in her *foremost* note, ib. 111. first and *foremost*, Nash UT. 62.

V. Double and intensified Comparison.

1. Double Comparison.

a) Adjectives with double Superlative Suffix.

§ 68. An important group of words in OE. show an *-m* suffix in the superlative, Teut. **-uma*, IE. *-amo* (*-mmo*, *-mo*). They end generally in *-ymest*, *-emest*, *-mest*, the normal *-est* being added, except in the words *forma* and *hindema*, thus giving a double superlative suffix. These suffixes have already been referred to, §§ 1, 58, and the

later substitution of *-most* for *-mest*, through confusion with the adverbs *more* and *most*, noted. Here belong *foremost* < OE. *fyrmost*, beside *forma*, § 67, *midmost* < OE. *midmest*, *middlemost* (= *middle* + *-most*) and *hindmost* < OE. *hindema*. *Hindermost*, *uttermost*, and *furthermost* are cases of the addition of the double superlative suffix to comparatives. On the basis of *uttermost* and *furthermost*, the double comparatives *uttermore* and *furthermore* are formed.

1) The first and last and the two *middlemost*, Puttenham 127. *middlemost*, Ezek. XLIII 5, Bible of 1551. *hyndermost*, Berner's Froissart 20. The Northern form is *hinmest*: nixt *hinmest*, James VI 57. *hinmest*, ib. 57, 58 etc. Chaucer wrote *hinderest*, CT. 624.

2) Shakespeare uses *inmost* (OE. *innemest*), *upmost*, *highmost*, v. Schmidt, Shakespeare Lexicon. Chaucer, Trans. of Boethius) writes *overmast*. For ME. *overest*, v. Stratmann. Present English has also *innermost* and *uppermost*.

3) Cases of *aftermost* (OE. *aftemest*), *nethermost*, I Kings VI 6 (OE. *niðemest*), *southmost* (OE. *sūðmest*), *hithermost*, *lowermost*, *undermost*, *endmost*, *topmost*, etc. were not noted in the texts examined.

b) Prefixing of *More* and *Most* to terminational Comparatives.

§ 69. Intensification of terminational comparatives by prefixing *more* and *most*, appears in ME. along with the introduction of periphrastic comparison. This is the so-called «double comparison» proper. It is common throughout the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, both in prose and verse, and is frequent with Shake-

speare, lasting into the eighteenth century in literary English. In the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, it is most common with monosyllabic and dissyllabic adjectives, but is found even with trisyllabic.

1) Double comparatives: *more fressher*, Morte D. 283, 20. *more reufullyr*, ib. 425, 16. *more weyker*, ib. 447, 12. *more wooder*, ib. 597, 13. *more gentiller*, ib. 650, 30. *more doolfuller*, ib. 846, 5. *more wighter*, York Pl. 355, 201. *more werse* and *greuouse*, Bl. and Eg. 23, 23. *more preciouser*, PL. CLVI 121. *more sadder*, ib. CCLIX 11. *more greater*, Elyot II 43. *more larger*, ib. II 272. *more higher*, ib. II 302. *more bolder*, ib. II 438. *more lowser* . . . *more weaker*, Ascham Tox. 121. *more flatter*, ib. 136. *more diligenter*, Latimer S. 53. *more redier*, TM. 163. *more grauer*, Googe 78. *more bitter*, *more better*, Lyly Euph. 114. *more stronger*, ib. 116. *more plesanter*, Lodge 24. *more sounder*, Markham 64. *more calmer*, Greene AA. 229. *more finer*, ib. BB. 170. *more surer*, Marlowe, Tamb. I 19. *a more neerer* example, W. Webbe 46 (= a triple comparative, § 62, 5).

With separation of comparatives: For ther fond sir Bors *gretter* defence in that knyght *more* than he wende, Morte D. 675, 21, 22.

2) Double superlatives: *most worshipfullest*, Morte D. 57, 11. *most shamefullest*, ib. 74, 37. *moost curteyst*, ib. 394, 29. *most meschyuoust*, ib. 413, 32. *most mightiest*, ib. 438, 34. *moost vntruest*, ib. 635, 33. *most nexte*, Bl. and Eg. 132, 32. *most lowest*, Elyot I 4. *most sharpest witted* and excellent lerned, ib. I 59. *most noblest*, PL. CVIII 84. *most greatest*, ib. CLVI 121. *most unlikest*, Four PP. 369. *moost fittest*, Ascham Tox. 45. *most vilest*, Lodge 56. *most learnedst*, W. Webbe 18. *most obscurest*, ib. 54. *most noblest*,

Lyly Euph. 127. *most ciuilest*, ib. 247. *most finest*, Chapman. BB. 16. *most cruellest*, Nash UT. 66. *nixt hinmest*, James VI 59.

Note. An unusual case is the following: «In the *more* that þe persone is *more harde* to be conuertysed and tourned to his lawe, the *more* ought she afterward when she is ouercome, to be *more constant & stedfast* to kepe hit». (Bl. and Eg. 78, 22—5). This looks like the prefixing of *more* to periphrastic comparison instead of to terminational, ie., the *more more hard . . . the more more constant*, instead of, the *more harder, . . . the more constanter*. The writer used the *more . . . the more*, as correlatives, then in his wish to intensify placed the adjectives in the comparative.

c) Double terminational Comparison of *Worse* and *Less*.

§ 70. The two irregular comparatives *worse* (OE. *wiersa* < **wiersra*, ME. *wurse*, *worse*) and *less* (OE. *læssa* < *læsra*, ME. *lesse*, *lasse*) are occasionally enlarged by the terminational *-er* in the sixteenth century, the double comparatives *worser* and *lesser* appearing beside *worse* and *less*. Owing to their final *-s*, *worse* and *less* are enlarged only to double comparatives, never taking the superlative suffix *-est*. Cf. the extension of the comparative *near* to *nearer* and *nearest*, § 62. Of the ME. monosyllabic comparatives *near*, *far*, *worse*, *less*, *more*, only *more* has never been analogically enlarged, owing to its extremely frequent use as well as to euphonic reasons.

Worse and *less* are enlarged only as adjectives, not as adverbs.

1) *Worser*: I beare the *worser* wyl, Googe 56. No thyng can *worser* be | Than womens state, it is the worst, | I thynke of eche degre, ib. 60. To walk a *worser* way, ib. 63. from *worser* parts refin'd, Markham 86. In harder case and *worser* plight, Watson 66. made it *worser* by a second proposition, Puttenham 225. But better

here than in a *worser* place, Heywood 23. Lest that a *worser* mischief doth befall, Greene LG. 143. In show seems *worser* than the basest weed, ib. MP. 319. Unto this sin a *worser* doth succeed, Peele Ed. I 412.

Worser is used by Shakespeare (Franz § 64). It occurs, but not very commonly, in modern English, literary and dialectal: nor *worser* nor better, William Morris, House of the Wolfings 18. A *worser* guess, Dickens (cited by Franz).

2) *Lesser*: The greater payn, the *lesse* defence: The *lesse* defence, the *lesser* gayn, TM. 132. *lesser* disdain, Wyatt 57. The *lesse* in mynde, the *lesser* pain, | The *lesser* payne, *lesse* gryefe I fynd | . . . The happyer lyfe, *lesse* hurts annoye, | The *lesser* hurts, pleasure most ryfe, Googe 96. the greater my authorities are, the *lesser* is thy beliefe, Lyly Euph. 167. the ayre is more temperate and the colde *lesser*, ib. EE. 247. though bearing *lesser* brain, Clyomon and Clamydes 491. The, *lesser* creeping with his head into the greater's mouth, Puttenham 119. In *lesser* grief, James VI 41. *lesser* pangs, Spenser FQ. VI 37. in *lesser* things, Kyd Sp. Trag. 129. *lesser* waters, ib. *lesser* liberty, ib. 169. *lesser* lights, ib. VII 30. *lesser* grace, Greene BB. 167. *lesser* brooks, Drayton Poly. (1622).

Lesser continues in good usage beside *less* and is found frequently in modern literary English: the *lesser* lights, Gen. I 16. the *lesser* man, Tennyson Locksley Hall 6. a much *lesser* degree, M. Arnold (quoted by Baskerville). *lesser* and newer kindreds, William Morris House of the Wolfings.

§ 71. Cases of the double terminational comparison of other adjectives, like the modern dialectal *nicerer*, *bestest*, § 7, were not found.

2. Intensified Comparison.

§ 72. The comparison of adjectives may be strengthened by the presence of adverbs and adverbial expressions: eg. — *much, far, still, a great deal*, etc. This occurs frequently with comparatives, rarely with superlatives.

1) Comparative intensified:

a) *much*: *moche gretter* in numbre, Elyot II 292. *moche more diligent*, ib. II 425. So *moche trulye* the sorer, Ascham Tox. 60. *much greater* mischiefes, Markham 51.

b) *far*: *farre worsse*, Latimer S. 88. To make his name great . . . *farre more* than can be done by any of all these great troubles and warres, Hakluyt 25. *farre more wonder full*, Lever 37. *a farre more* covetousness, ib.

c) *Still*: be you *more righteous still* . . . be you *more holy still*, Northbrooke 80.

d) *A great deal*: *a grete dele better*, Ascham Tox. 26. *a great dele more*, ib. *a gret dele sorer*, ib. 29.

2) Superlative intensified: the *farr most cruel* kind of death that ever was, Horestes 573, 102.

§ 73. Double comparatives can be further intensified by the presence of adverbs.

much more shorter way, Hakluyt 48. *far more richer* in goods, Lyly Euph. 150. how *much more* art thou duller then a stone, ib. 162.

§ 74. In the fifteenth century *aller-*, *alther-*, *alder-*, (< OE. *caltra*, the *th* or *d* being transition sounds between *l* and *r*) is frequently prefixed to the superlative, as in the Chaucerian *alþerworste*, *alþerfairest*, *alþerfirst* (Trans. of Boethius). This usage survives in the sixteenth century, but is found rarely. With Shakespeare (Franz § 71) it occurs but once, and is plainly an archaism.

pou makist her herte full sare | þat loves þe *alther best*, York Pl. 110, 253. and to al mankynde nowe *althir mast*, ib. 110, 270. *altherlast*, Douglas V. 251, 21. *aldermost* high and dread sovereign lord, PL. XXVI 17. not *aldermost* to his pleasure, ib. CXXXIII 103. *aldermost* meet and profitable, ib. CLXXXIX 141. Thou Spencer art the *alderliefest* swaine, Watson 173. — Greene uses the tautological, the *alderliefest* swaine *of all*, MP. 304.

§ 75. The superlative is occasionally prefixed to the positive in order to intensify.

Is *sweetest sweet* that men can have, Greene MP. 286. my *dearest dear*, Peele Ed. I 380. My *greatest great* Triumuerie, Markham 55.

§ 76. Intensifying combination of words of equal root or meaning appears in the following:

1) Superlative + the related noun: *highest height*, Nash UT. 69. *highest height*, Markham 58. *most pleasant pleasures*, Utopian Poetry 167.

2) Superlative + plural of the positive: Upon the sun, the *fairest* of all *fair*, Greene MP. 297.

3) Tautological superlative + noun superlative in meaning: *last endynge*, Latimer S. 20. *first founder*, Puttenham 59. *first beginner*, Bale KJ. 31. *first beginners*, W. Webbe 68. *Fyrste brynger* in to the world of shootynge, Ascham Tox. 51. *first inuentor*, Northbrooke 117.

4) Other efforts (hyperbolical) to intensify: *farre* before the *formost*, TM. 128. *more hard* then *hardest* flint, Watson 99. *more beastly* than *Beasts*, Sidney Ap. 35. *Brighter* than the *brightest* glass, Greene MP. 305. *more meke* than is | the *mckest* doue, Ancient Ballads 351. then (= than) *highest height* of Fame flew *much more higher*, Markham 58.

§ 77. Many adjectives, the meaning of which is already superlative, are frequently intensified by comparison. So oftenest with *chief* (originally a substantive), *chiefest* being used to excess in sixteenth century English.

1) Terminational comparison of *chief*: *chiefest* ioy, Gismond 584, 109. *chefest* paine, ib. 554, 26. the alderman and *cheyffest* of the crafts, Machyn 42. *chiefest* Joye, Norton Gorb. 98. *chiefest* guest, Kyd. Sp. Trag. 150. *cheifest* point, Ascham Tox. 99. *chiefeste* pleasure, More Utop. 114. *chiefest* remedy, TM. 184. *chyfest* place, Googe 84. *chiefest* substance, Watson 121.

Note. *Chieffer* and *chiefest* are used sometimes in place of *more* and *most* in comparison: in the *chiefest* flourishing kingdoms, Nash UT. 76.

2) Terminational comparison of other adjectives: *perfecter*, Ascham Tox. 20. *perfiter*, ib. 21. *perfectest*, Gosson 58. *extreamest*, Watson 175. *extremest*, Spenser FQ. IX 17; Kyd Sp. Trag. 170; Greene J. IV 206. *ver- yest*, Nash UT. 33. *veriest*, ib. 164; Udall RD. 44; Clyomon and Clamydes 497. *diuineest*, Markham 43. *choicest* (originally a substantive), Greene BB. 159. *choisest*, Ascham Schol. 128. etc.

3) Periphrastic comparison: *more perfect*, Latimer S. 20. *most especiall*, ib. 184. *moste mortall*, Elyot II 119. *most principall*, More Utop. 115. *most mortal*, Greene AA. 244. *most vniversal*, Puttenham 39. *most diuine*, Sidney 50.

VI. Elative (absolute) Use of the Comparative and Superlative.

§ 78. The elative or absolute construction of the comparative and superlative is used to indicate a quality in a person or thing or idea in an especially high degree, without definite comparison with other persons or things or ideas. In English the construction is a Latinism, cf. *vir fortissimus*, 'a very brave man', *senectus est loquacior*, 'old age is somewhat talkative'. With regard to form, absolute superlatives are generally distinguished from genuine superlatives by the absence of the definite, or the presence of the indefinite article. With genuine superlatives the definite article is not often omitted, § 89.

§ 79. The elative use is most common with periphrastic superlatives, and appears very early. It is likely that some of the earliest *most* superlatives were of this nature. The construction is common in Caxton and in the Paston Letters, and in the York Plays almost no periphrastic superlatives occur which are not elatives. Early in the sixteenth century the elative was a very frequent literary use of the superlative. This is seen in Bale's plays, in Roy and Barlowe, and in Elyot, for example, in which elatives are notably abundant, and numerically exceed the superlatives in *-est*. Thus Elyot uses about 160 *most* superlatives, 124 being elatives, and 20 superlatives in *-est*; Bale's *Kynge Johan* contains 20 elatives, and scarcely any genuine *most* or *-est* superlatives. In Ascham's *Toxophilus* are about 97 *most* superlatives, 68 being elatives, and about 18 in *-est*. Since the sixteenth century,

the part played by elative superlatives has been somewhat less important. For the sixteenth century *most wonderful*, the modern writer generally prefers *very wonderful*, *exceedingly wonderful*, or similarly.

It may be added that the elative construction is not often treated in English grammars. Goold Brown, *Grammar of English Grammars*, 1882, after a few observations on the «intensive» use of the superlative, adds the interesting remark, «This use of the terms of comparison is thought by some not to be very grammatical».

§ 80. A comparison of the history of the elative construction in French and in English is interesting. In French, the weakening of the Latin terminational superlatives into elatives developed the circumlocution or periphrasis, the definite article and *plus*, to indicate the superlative degree. In English the elative use appeared later and secondarily, and helped to establish circumlocutory or periphrastic superlatives, alongside of but not replacing terminational superlatives

1. Elative Superlatives.

§ 81. The elative superlative is common before titles, in phrases of compliment, in direct address, in exclamations, and simply to give emphasis.

Her *most noble* goode grace, Bl. and Eg. 2, 14. *moost semely* in sight, York Pl. 445, 398. o *most dolorose* day, Digby Mysteries 173, 56. My *most reverend* master, PL. XLVIII 35. your *most noble* presence, ib. LVI 44. this *most pestilent* mischief, Four S. I 1. *mooste valiant* capitayne, Elyot I 107. *most noble* Cesar, ib. II 51. in the *most pure* firmament, ib. II 194. thy *most bounteous* mercye, Bale Three L. 46, our *most noble* kyng, Latimer S. 19. *most*

gracious reuerente Lordes, Lever 97. *alway most cold*, Surrey TM. 38. *hir highnesse most worthy* counsellors, Udall RD. 86. *our father most auntyent*, Heywood Wether 214, 37. *most unhonest* dealings, Dee 7. *a most wicked* deed, Damon and Pithias 218. *most vnnatural* to him in a *most iust* cause, Lyly Euph. 102. *a most excellent* wryter, W. Webbe 30. *your most excellent* Maiestie, E. Webbe 15. *most wretched* I, borne in some dismall daie, Watson 204. *most passing* strange, Kyd Sp. Trag. 148. *a most sweet* face, Sidney, Ap. 30.

§ 82. The elative use of the terminational superlative is less frequent. It appears characteristically in the second half of the sixteenth century, being scarcely known in the fifteenth and early in the sixteenth century. It is a use belonging to poetry and the literary language, not to the language of daily intercourse.

greatest Gloriana, Spenser FQ. I 3. For *fairest* Una's sake, ib. III 2. the *fairest* Una, ib. VI 30. through *highest* heaven, ib. IV 9. Ah, *dearest* lord, ib. VI 39. O light-some day, the lampe of *highest* Jove, ib. VII 23. from *huest* hap to *depest* myserye, Googe 60. *depest* sorrowes, Sackville Gorb. 140. a crimson robe of *brightest* dye, Peele MP. 287.

2. Elative Comparatives.

§ 83. The elative use of comparatives is most common with Spenser (Kitchin, FQ. I, Notes). It occurs in Shakespeare (Franz § 62, 2). Instances elsewhere are rare. It is found only with terminational comparatives, and never gained the hold of the elative superlative, terminational or periphrastic. Hence it is, partly, that even in texts in which the *most* superlatives far out-

number the *-est* superlatives, the terminational comparatives generally outnumber those with *more*. In Ascham's *Toxophilus* are about 11 comparatives with *more* and 58 in *-er*; beside 97 superlatives in *most* and 18 in *-est*. In the *Utopia*, beside 48 superlatives in *most* and 38 in *-est* are 12 comparatives with *more* and 38 in *-er*. Elyot, on the other hand, corresponding to his 160 superlatives with *most* and 20 in *-est*, uses about 66 comparatives with *more* and about 40 in *-er*.

Elative use of the comparative is distinctly a literary use. Cases were not noted outside of verse.

Helpe thou, o holy Virgin, chiefe of nine, | Thy *weaker* (= too weak) novice to performe thy will, Spenser *FQ.* Introd. 2. his *looser* make, ib. VII 7. and strove for to amaze the *weaker* sights, VII 30. Entire affection hateth *nicer* hands, ib. VIII 40. Abandon then the base and *viler* clowne, ib. Shep. Cal. X 37. This their admission breeds a *greater* doubt, Kyd *Sp. Trag.* 80.

Other possible cases are: Are forced for my *greater* grief, from me their face to hide, Surrey 101. in temperate breathing of the *milder* heaven, Norton *Gorb.* 115. Under the climate of the *milder* heaven, Peele *LG.* 369. and made me leave my princely pleasant seats | To come into his *runder* part of Wales, ib. *Ed.* I. 391. All these may be explained otherwise, however.

VII. The Substantivation of Comparatives and Superlatives.

§ 84. Old English shows no less freedom in the substantivation of the comparative and the

superlative than in the substantivation of the positive, the addition of nouns like *one*, *man*, *thing*, to denote the substantive use being unnecessary, and the inflection remaining the same. Compare these examples from *Beowulf*: *Næfre ic maran geseah | eorla ofer eorðan*, 247. *no þæt læsest wæs hond-gemota*, ib. 2354. *þæt he on eorðan geseah | þone leofestan lifes æt ende*, 2823—4. *Hæfde se goda Geata leoda | cempa gecorone, þara þe he cenoste | findan mihte*, 207. This freedom remains in early Middle English. With the loss of endings, making singular and plural the same, limitation sets in and a substantive is more often joined. Constructions like *the best man*, *the best warrior*, are substituted for the older *se betsta*, in which the substantivated adjective stands alone, or *betst beadurınca*, in which the substantivated adjective is followed by a partitive genitive. In the singular, substantives like *one*, *man*, *woman*, *thing*, begin to be added, substantivated comparatives such as *the wiser*, *the greater*, etc. remaining common in the plural. Here also appear for the first time cases like Malory's: *the fayrest tree* and *the most delectable*, *Morte D.* 696, 32. *The goodlyest yong man* and *the fairest*, ib. 213, 24—5, in which the function of the adjective is half adjective and half substantive.

In the sixteenth century, the substantivated comparatives and superlatives, terminational and periphrastic, are found in all constructions, are used as subject, object, in the predicate, and in apposition. They may be used also in the vocative and in exclamations, as *dearest*, *fairest*, *most wretched*, etc.; but examples scarcely occur in the literature till the end of the sixteenth century.

For a sketch of the development of adjective sub-

stantivation, especially the construction with *one*, v. Gerber, Die Substantivierung des Adjektivs im XV. und XVI. Jahrhundert; Diss. Franz § 73—83. Kellner, Historical Outlines of English Syntax § 226. Einkenkel 24—29.

1. Singular.

§ 85. Comparatives and superlatives may be used as substantives in the singular. They may refer to persons, to things, or to abstractions.

1) Comparatives: For *better* outhur for *worse*, Morte D. 807, 26. he þoght þe *worse* went on hys side, G. of W. 11073. Though it cost me the *more* (= the more part) of my good, PL. LXX 53. the *elder* is just wedded, ib. CCLXXII. I am the *elder*, Latimer S. 60. the *leefer* of these two, Wyatt 109. The *lesser* creeping with his head into the *greater's* mouth, Puttenham 119.

2) Superlatives: Where I remain thine own *most best*, thine own *most true*, thine own *most just*, Surrey 78. But wealeaway mine own *most best* Is even the *worthiest* for to love, TM. 234. Neither the flatterer could take aduantage to entrap him in his talke, nor ye *wisest* any assurance of his friendship, Lyly Euph. 35. And were it badder, it is not the *worst*, ib. EE. 208. The *eldest* dying without issue, ib. 451. Now I am at the *lowest*, Kyd Sp. Trag. 21.

3) Referring to a preceding noun, (cf. supra and § 88): Kynge Arthurs foole that is the best felawe and the *meryest* in the world, Morte D. 432, 2. Ye haue berafte me of the fayrest fellowship and the *truest* of knyghthode that ever were sene, ib. 621, 2. An excellent example and a *worse*, Ascham Tox. 103. Either in forgetting a worde or in chaunging a *good* with a *worse*, ib. Schol. 26.

4) Substantive use of the comparatives of participles: I the *best-beloued* of all the rest, Grimald TM. 116.

2. Plural.

§ 86. Comparatives and superlatives may be used as substantives in the plural, with and without -s. The forms with -s are real substantives, the -s being carried over analogically from noun plurals. Except *yongers*, the cases in which -s is added agree with those in modern English. They are restricted to terminational forms, and to comparatives.

1) Without -s: Callyburne, one of the *sirengest* of pauye, Morte D. 170, 9, lettres and ballads of the *moost goodlyest* that were vsed in tho dayes, ib. 363, 25. Yet are thou not of soche post, | But there be *better* in thys contre, G. of W. 796. He chose the *eldest* and *wisest* of them all, Elyot II 438. The *wisest* had not all that same opinion, Lodge 6. Of the *best* and *most frequented*, I wyll rehearse some, W. Webbe 58. The *chiefest* were these, ib. 28.

2) With -s: I owe hym none homage, ne none of myn elders, Morte D. 74, 35. a ryche abbey of your *elders* foundacyon, ib. 135, 15. the which was done by your *elthers deuyse*, ib. 807, 4. your *elders* wroth alway, PL. LXIV. that the sage grauitie and reuerence of the *elders* should kepe the *yongers* from wanton licence of wordes and beliauioure, More Utop. 94. crow against your *bettters*, Respublica 328, 96. flattering their *bettters*, enuyng their equals, despising their *inferiours*, Ascham Schol. 33. Bee humble to thy *superiours*, gentle to thy equalls, to. thy *inferiours* fauorable, enuie not thy *bettters*, Lyly Euph. 430. our egalls and *inferiours*, Puttenham 228.

In the following (noted by Kellner, Introd. to Blanchardyn and Eglantine) the use of the form without -s for the more usual -s plural is striking: He passed them that were his *elder* in age, Bl. and Eg. 13, 21. Original, *les plus sagies de soy*.

3. Substantivation through following Nouns.

§ 87. Examples of the substantivation of comparative and superlative as personal substantives through *one* are not frequent, even in the last half of the sixteenth century, when it was very common with the positive. Dr. Gerber, investigating fifteenth and sixteenth century English, finds but one example: of tribes and elders and the *mightiest ones*, Peele, DB. 474. Nor are examples of the substantivation through *thing*, to denote the neuter idea, very common: the *truest thing* of all, TM. 23. a faythfull frende is *thing most worth*, ib. 185.

For the construction *one the wisest*, v. § 93.

VIII. Some syntactical Peculiarities.

1. Post-Position of Comparative.

§ 88. The order exemplified by Ascham's *a virtue most noble*, in which the attributive comparative follows instead of precedes the noun, is common in both the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, especially in the latter half of the sixteenth. It is found only with the periphrastic forms, more commonly with superlatives than with comparatives, and more commonly with elatives than with genuine superlatives. For cases like *the fayrest tree*

and the most delectable, Morte D. 696, 32, where the first adjective precedes, and the second follows, serving half as adjective, half as noun, v. §§ 84. 85, 3. In modern English this post-position of the comparative is less common.

A stroke *most dolorous* that ever man stroke, Morte D. 84, 31. *renke moste royall*, York Pl. 307, 10. man *moste wise*, ib. 397, 31. Who saw ever a spectacle *more pitevs*, Digby Mysteries 182, 322—23. myracles *most gloriose*, ib. 185, 415. þes Crym *most vngraciose*, ib. 193, 649. a vice *most ugly* and ferrest from humanitie, Elyot II 55. an exercise *most holsome*, and also a pastime *most honest*, Ascham Tox. 38. a thinge *most profitable*, ib. 79. a Prince *most perelesse*, More Utop. 27. an offence *most detestable*, ib. 130. a thyng *most plesaunt* and honorable, Lever 59. a thing *most dishonest*, Lyly Euph. 102. a vice *most detestable*, ib. 146. a thing *most strange*, ib. End. 37.

2. Omission of definite Article.

§ 89. The definite article is sometimes omitted, especially in verse, before the attributive terminational superlative, less often before the periphrastic superlative. Compare similar constructions in German, *in tiefster Nacht*, etc. The article is frequently omitted when the adjective is in the predicate, and after the first adjective, when there are two or more in succession.

1) With terminational superlative: whom to serve is *grettest liberte*, Caxton B. of C. 11, 98. In *longest* night, or in the *shortest* daye: | In *clearest* skye, or when clowdes *thickest* be; TM. 11. winne *greatest* credit, Gosson 58. doth comfort *saddest* wights, Gascoigne St. Gl. 49. *more* hard than *hardest* flint, Watson 99. as *brightest* noone to *darkest* night, Puttenham 242. lays on *slowest* load,

Peele Ed. I 396. with *greatest* pleasure, Kyd Sp. Trag. 49. upon *extremest* height, ib. 61.

2) With periphrastic superlative: a stroke *most dolorous* that ever man stroke, Morte D. 84, 31. Doest finde me here, *most wofull* wretch that life hath in despight, Surrey TM. 17. Yea, that to his soules perile is *most haynous* harme of all, TM. 252.

3) In the predicate: Ye be þe rewlar of þis regyon | & *most worthy* sovereyn of nobylnes, Digby Mysteries 60, 169. When they be *sweetest* and *most solemne*, Puttenham 93. Whatsover is *most worthy* to be learned, Sidney Ap. 45.

4) With several superlatives in succession: the *most puissant* and *passionate* and *most generall*, Puttenham 59. the *most auncient* and of *most fatherly* antiquitie, Sidney Ap. 50.

3. Unusual Word Order.

§ 90. In addition to the case of inverted order cited in § 88, a few of minor importance may be noted, in which the adverb *more* is separated from the adjective, or in which the position of the comparative phrase is unusual. Such inversions occur generally in verse.

What harder is then stone, what more than water soft, TM. 228. and more than snow therefore | I shall be white, Wyatt 220. Incke and Paper cannot bee to a more profitable purpose employed, Sidney Ap. 51.

4. The Superlative with *of all other*.

§ 91. A construction not found in present usage is exemplified by Webbe's *the best of all other*, or Elyot's *of all other most worthy*. It appears in ME., and remains

common through the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, being especially frequent with Elyot and Puttenham. Logically the use of *other* with the superlative is not legitimate. Two constructions seem combined, *other* being introduced from the second by contamination. The normal constructions are: (1) The superlative intensified by the partitive *of all*, cf. OE. *ealra mæst*, ME. *aldermest*, *alderliefest*, etc. § 74, whence the modern construction of the type, *worthiest of all*, or *shortest of all*, beside occasional *worthiest of any*; or, the same with the plural of the noun supplied, as *worthiest of all men*, *shortest of all ways*. (2) The preferable construction with the comparative, as *worthier than all*, or, with frequent *other*, *worthier than all others*; or, the same with the plural of the noun supplied, *worthier than all other men*, *shorter than all other ways*. *Other* seems to have been carried over from (2) into (1), where it did not belong historically, and does not belong logically, giving phrases like *shortest of all other* beside the normal *shortest of all*, or *shorter than all others*.

§ 92. In the majority of examples, the singular *other* is found instead of *others*, the noun, sometimes supplied (v. 6 below), being understood. Other variations occur through the substitution of *any* for *all*, *among* for *of*, and *the rest* for *other*. The construction needs further investigation, especially the collection and examination of examples from the period before 1400.

1) Superlative + *of all other*: Sir Trystram was most preysed of all other, Morte D. 316, 13. Tou art fayrest of all other, ib. 435, 26. I ensure yow ye shal be the happiest of alle other, Bl. and Eg. 39, 9. and fairest of all other be sighte, G. of W. Caius MS. 11.

161—62. O howe moste unhappy am I of all other, Elyot I 180. the lorde that of al other is highest, ib. II 3. a thinge of all other moste difficile, ib. 126. of all other most worthy to suffre moste shamefull dethe, ib. 138. the moste cruell and paynefull dethe of all other, ib. 148. who trusted them moste of all other, ib. 245. Of al other moste fit and agreable, Ascham Tox. 38. a thinge moste necessary of all other, ib. 63. sonest of al other, ib. 68. incomparably the best of all other, W. Webbe 45. of all other next the diuine most honorable and worthy, Puttenham 54. Of all other the most vaine, ib. 291.

2) *Of all others*: of all others the most arrogant and iniurious, Puttenham 21. the most excellent imitators and counterfaiors of all others, ib.

3) *Among all other*: a most dissolute wryter among all other, W. Webbe 44.

4) *Of any other(s)*: most lyke of any other, Elyot II 404. the best and most delicat of any other, Puttenham 130. a forme of Poesie most wittie of any others, ib. 60.

5) *Of (all) the rest*: The most famous verse of the rest, is called Hexametrum, W. Webbe 71. The Piller is a figure among all the rest of the Geometricall most beawtifull, Puttenham 110.

6) *Of all other* + plural of the noun: of all other bestis is accounted moste fierce and cruell, Elyot II 169. the most easie and shortest of all other wayes, Hakluyt 25. love is of all other humane affections the most puissant, Puttenham 59.

7) Similar mixed constructions, without *other*: Who art the highest God of any heauenly Roy, Puttenham 95. Poetrie is of all humane learning the most auncient and of most fatherly antiquitie, Sidney 48.

In Modern English: «his versification is by far the most perfect of any English poet», Saintsbury, Nineteenth Century Literature 268.

5. The appositive Superlative with *one*.

§ 93. The construction exemplified by *one the truest knyght aliue*, Faerie Queene I 3, 37, is frequent in ME., especially in Chaucer, and occurs as late as Shakespeare. Examples from the former may be found in Einenkel, p. 89. ff., Kellner, Outlines of English Syntax, § 76, and from the latter in Abbott § 16, Franz § 80. Instances are not very common in the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, the partitive instead of the appositive construction being normal. Cf. *one of the most renowned knyghtes of the world*, Morte D. 282.27; *one of the beste Knyghtes of the world*, ib. 733, 32 — beside: *Syre Lamorak the moost noblest knyghte one that ever was*, ib. 792, 3 (see p. 71).

The partitive is the normal construction even with Chaucer. Sometimes the two constructions cross, and *of* is carried over from one into the other. Thus are explained the peculiar and illogical *on of the best farynge man on lyve*, Chaucer, The Frankelynes Tale 204. *One of the best enteched creature*, Id. Troylus and Cryseide 832 (Kellner, § 176; so Gerber; Einenkel, 891.)

§ 94. Attention has been called very often to this construction, and various explanations have been offered. Cf. C. Stoffel, The Quasi-Appositional Superlative after 'One', Englische Studien 27, 253 ff., for a discussion of the question. Mr. Stoffel believes it is a Latinism. «In Madvig's *Latin Grammar* . . . I find 'Unus or unus omnium is used to strengthen the excluding force of the superlative, e. g. Cicero, Lael. 1: P. Scaevolam *unum* nostrae

civitatis et ingenio et iustitia *praestantissimum* audeo dicere; Corn. Nepos, *Milt.* 1: Miltiades et antiquitate generis et gloria maiorum *unus omnium maxime* florebat'. Cf. also: Cicero, *Brutus*: Eloquentia res *una* est *omnium difficillima*. It will hardly be denied that the Latin construction exemplified in the passage just quoted, is exactly analogous to the Middle and Tudor English phrase.»

§ 95. Professor Skeat (*Chaucer's Works* II 470), Kitchen (*Faery Queen*, Book I 178), and A. Schmidt (*Shakespeare Lexicon* v. *one*) find the explanation in ellipsis, *e. g.* *one the truest* = *one (who is) the truest*. Einkenel and Kellner offer no explanation. Mätzner III 287, suggests romance influence, the following of a substantive with the indefinite article by a superlative with the definite article being common in the romance languages. To these Mr. Stoffel objects that examples occur too early for romance influence, cf *he hæfð geworht ane þa mæstan synne*, in Aelfric; and that the hypothesis that the construction is elliptical offers no answer to the question why *one* is used at all, *I am one the fairest* being then perfectly equivalent to *I am the fairest*. He suggests further that traces of the idiom with *one* may be seen in modern English in the occasional false concord of the verb and antecedent of a relative. In cases like Macaulay's «one of the most extensive, difficult and salutary reforms that ever *was* accomplished by any statesman», the writer seems to have a sort of consciousness that a singular antecedent to the relative should follow *one*; hence uses a singular verb, as if the sentence stood for an original *one the most salutary*, instead of *one of the most salutary*.

Undoubtedly the superlative phrase is appositive rather than attributive. When the noun is not supplied, as in

Shakespeare's *one the wisest prince*, the superlative is to be considered as substantivated not attributive, *e. g. one the worthiest* is not equivalent to *the worthiest one* but to *one the worthiest (person)*.

Syre Lamorak, the moost noblest knyghte one that euer was in Arthurs dayes, Morte D. 792, 3. one the best chylde that coude ouwher be founden, Caxton, Reynard the Fox. 34 (quoted by Stoffel). That she is one the worthiest, | The truest and the faithfullest, | The gentlest and the meekest of minde, TM. 236. For he is one the truest knyght alive, Spenser FQ. I 3, 37.

§ 96. The appositive superlative is found also, though less commonly, with other numerals.

At two the first strokes, Morte D. 343, 29. two the best knyghtes that euer were, *ib.* 419, 31. two the best sanapes, G. of W. 8095. the height of three the tallest sons of mortal seed, Spenser FQ. I 7, 8.

6. Superlative in Comparisons of Two.

§ 97. The superlative is used frequently in comparisons of two, as in modern English. Certain superlatives, as *first*, *foremost*, *last*, must be used almost unavoidably of two; and often *better* or *worse* could not be substituted for *best*, *worst* without noticeable loss of force. Compare Ascham's «*For fyrst the lesse hoole, yf it be depe, is the worst to heale*», and Marlowe's «*Lady, the last was truest of the twaine*», in which *worse*, and *truer* could not be substituted for *worst* and *truest* without loss. Hence, partly, the frequency of the construction, although logically not permissible.

I am the *yongest* and *moost weykest* of you bothe, Morte D. 114, 28—9. Ye shall chese which is *moost worthy*,

that is syr Bagdemagus and sir Tor my son, ib. 124, 7—8. As for sir launcelot and sir Tristram lete them be, for the *werst* of them will not be lyghtly matched of no knyghtes that I knowe lyuynge, ib. 439, 17. I have two sones that were but late made knyghtes and the *eldest* hyghte Sir Torre, ib. 740, 13—14. of two harms the *least* is to be taken, PL. CLXXXIX 141. Whych of pes to personnes was *most beholddyn* to pat man, Digby Mysteries 80, 658. Fyrst it is their custome ever | To go two and two together | Excepte a grett impediment | And so to my ladys chamber | Formost pricketh in the *elder* | Which of them is *most auncrent*, R. and B. 84. Of these two euyls let se now chuse the *best*, Wyatt TM. 225. My lord Ferrex, your *eldest* sonne, misledd | By traitours framde of yong vntempred wittes | Assembleth force against your *younger* sonne, Norton Gorb. 126. and brought him forth at once too twinnes, *theldest* she sent away, Misogonus 422, 27. Soe two *most goodly* virgins . . . , Of which the *eldest*, that Fidessa hight, Spenser FQ. X 12 (but cf. Kitchin's note). Lady, the *last* was *truest* of the twaine, Marlowe Ed. II 207. To know whether the masculine or the feminine gender be *most worthy*, Greene BB. 156. I warrant you the *meanest* of us both | Shall have a mate to lead us from the church, ib. 157. Which contents you best, | To be a man or be Lord Lacy's wife? ib. 177. Whether of these be the *most excellent*, Sidney Ap. 70.

Appendix.

1. *But for than* after *no more, no less*, as in Shakespeare's *no more but instruments* (Franz § 72), occurs rarely.

And all that was *no more but* mine empressed mynde, Surrey, TM. 8.

2. Instances of the following of *more* by *nor*, as in the modern dialectal *more nor ever*, were nowhere found.

3. The variant *then* for *than* after comparatives is found throughout the fifteenth and the sixteenth century.

Gretter þen, G. of W. 6826. *freschar then*, ib. 8137. *better than*, Bl. and Eg. 63, 7. *bygggar than*, Morte D. 313, 4. *more pure than*, Elyot II 195. *harder then*, TM. 228. *more carnal than spiritual, more wordlye then godly*, Lever 72. *more rich then*, Horestes 527, 895. *fuller then*, Gosson 33. *perfecter than*, ib. 68. *more weary then*, Sidney Ap. 61.

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Other Abbreviations.

- IE. = Indo-European.
 Teut. = Teutonic, Primitive Germanic.
 OE. = Old English.
 ME. = Middle English.
 LWS. = Late West Saxon.
- Diss. = Dissertation.
 Introd. = Introduction.
 App. = Appendix.
 Ded. Ep. = Dedicatory Epistle
 Gen. Arg. = General Argument.
- N. Eng. Dict. = New English Dictionary, Ed. by the Philological
 Society.
- AS. Gr. = Sievers, Anglo Saxon Grammar.
 N. Eng. Gr. = Sweet, New English Grammar.
 Shak. = Shakespeare.
- ca. = *circa*, about.
 v. = *vide*, see.
 cf. = *confer*, compare.
 ib. = *ibidem*, in the same place.
 id. = *idem*, the same.
 n. = Note.
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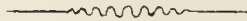
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Hahn, Dr. Ed., Die Wirtschaft der Welt am Aus- gange des XIX. Jahrhunderts. ‡ Eine wirtschaftsgeogra-

phische Kritik nebst
einigen positiven Vorschlägen. Lex. 8°. geheftet 5 M. 50 Pf.; fein in
Leinwand geb. 7 M.

„Nun aber liegt noch ein Werk vor uns, das uns in ganz besonderem Maße dazu anregt, es warm zu empfehlen. Das erste Werk Hahns, «Die Haustiere und ihre Beziehungen zur Wirtschaft des Menschen», hat großes Aufsehen gemacht und vielen Beifall gefunden. Wir meinen, dieses zweite müßte einen großen Leserkreis noch mehr anziehen. Ed. Hahn wandelt nicht in angetretenen Bahnen, er vertritt keine durch Parteigeist oder sonstige Voreingenommenheit beeinflusste Richtung, er schwört auf kein Wort irgend eines Meisters. Was er sagt, ist herausgewachsen aus einer scharfen und gänzlich unbefangenen Beobachtung von Menschen und Dingen, entstanden auf Grund einer langen und tiefgründigen Prüfung dessen, was sein klarer Blick in sich aufgenommen. Er ist einer von denen, welche die Wahrheit ernstlich suchen. Viele seiner Meinungen und Anschauungen werden Widerspruch herausfordern, aber ebensoviel werden Zustimmung finden, und indem er das gesamte wirtschaftliche Leben mit dem Blicke eines Mannes von unfassender, weitausgreifender Bildung ohne das Scheuleder zünftiger Gelehrsamkeit ergündet, und indem sich mit dem scharfen Urtheil die Herzenswärme eines edeln Menschenfreundes verbindet, muß er bei seinen Lesern nicht nur die Achtung finden, die stets einem Autor zu teil wird, der niemand zu lieb und niemand zu leid forscht und darstellt, sondern auch die warme Sympathie für den, der unbekümmert um der Menschen Gunst das sagt, was er denkt und glaubt. Wir meinen nicht zu irren, wenn wir diesem merkwürdigen, eigenartigen, durch und durch originellen Buche einen großen Erfolg voraussagen.“

(Karlsruher Zeitung.)

„. . . Ich kann nur hoffen und wünschen, dem Buche durch diese heransgerissenen Bruchstücke Leser, Nachdenker und Nachlebende erworben zu haben, das sollte mir die größte Freude sein. . .“

(Deutsche Zeitung.)

„. . . Und alles, was er schreibt, ist klar, gründlich, zuweilen genial gedacht und glänzend geschrieben. Nimm und lies! So möchten wir allen sozial interessierten Lesern zureufen.“

(Deutsche Evang. Kirchenzeitung.)

„Endlich wieder einmal ein Buch, das sein Geld wert ist, aus dem man etwas lernen kann, das die Eintönigkeit der phrasenstaubigen litterarischen Sandwüste originell durchbricht. . . Ich mag es nicht unterlassen, auf das Hahnsche Buch jeden aufmerksam zu machen, der es verträgt, die Dinge auch in allseitiger Beleuchtung zu sehen, nicht in einseitiger, eine Darstellungsmethode, die insbesondere unseren Parteiderwischen so gerne beliebt, um das Wasser des Vorteils auf ihre Mühlen zu leiten. Das ist ein seltener Vorzug, der das Buch so lehrreich und anziehend macht. Der Verfasser will keiner Partei, keiner doktrinären Klique zu lieb und zu leid sprechen, sondern aus der Wirrnis der Erscheinungen, aus dem Toben des Daseinskampfes mit dem Rüstzeug einer geraden Logik und einer scharfen, unbeirrten Beobachtungskraft die festen Wege herausschälen, die in eine bessere Zukunft führen. . .“

(Der Hammer.)

„. . . Jede Zeile des Verfassers bekennt ihren Ursprung aus lebendiger, dem handelnden Leben zugewandter Empfindung und aus dem starken Drange, der Menschheit durch die Aufweisung des rechten wirtschaftlichen Weges praktischen Nutzen zu schaffen. Die Ziele des Verfassers beschränken sich nicht auf die Tagespolitik oder vereinzelte Maßnahmen, sie sind vielmehr umfassendster Art und wollen der gesamten Zukunftsentwicklung des Menschengeschlechts die Bahn weisen. . . Daß ein derartiges Buch das Interesse der weitesten Kreise zu fesseln imstande ist, liegt auf der Hand; es ist keine Gelehrten-schrift, sondern für die Gesamtheit der Gebildeten bestimmt. Der Verfasser hat schon manche wertvolle Gaben dargeboten und vielfach neuen leitenden Ideen Bahn gebrochen, so daß man auch von dem vorliegenden Werke hochgespannte Erwartungen hegen darf. Durch die Lektüre aber wird die Berechtigung solcher Erwartungen, wie wir uns zuversichtlich zu behaupten getrauen, außer allen Zweifel gesetzt. . .“

H. P.

Geschichte der neuern Philosophie

von Kuno Fischer.

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„In der „Deutschen Revue“ schreibt Th. Wiedemann in seinen „Sechzehn Jahre in der Werkstatt Leopold von Ranke's“: „Ranke suchte nach anderweitiger und anders gearbeiteter Belehrung. In Beziehung auf die Geschichte der neuern Philosophie zog er allen anderen bei weitem das Werk von Kuno Fischer vor, dem er Geistesreichtum und kongeniale Reproduktion der verschiedenen Systeme nachrühmte.“

„... Was Kuno Fischers Schriften und Vorträge so interessant macht, das ist das wahrhaft dramatische Leben, welches beide durchdringt, die innere Frische und geistige Elastizität, welche beide auszeichnet. ... Das Werk gehört nicht nur in die Bibliothek des Fachmannes, sondern ist dazu berufen, als eines der besten Bildungsmittel allen denen zu dienen, die den höchsten Aufgaben und idealen Interessen der ganzen Menschheit ihre Aufmerksamkeit zu widmen imstande sind.“ (Gegenwart.)

„... Fischers Eigentümlichkeit besteht in einer sonst fast nirgends erreichten Kunst, eine fremde Gedankenwelt von ihrem eigenen Mittelpunkt aus zu erleben und den Leser in der denkbar durchsichtigsten und eindringlichsten Form erleben zu lassen. ... Kuno Fischer steht nie als überlegener, verbessernder Schulmeister hinter den dargestellten Philosophen. Dieser Geschichtsschreiber läßt nicht seine Philosophen reden, sondern sie reden selbst. Sie tragen ihre eigenen Gedanken vor, nur freier, natürlicher, in einer lebhafteren, durchsichtigeren Sprache, als wir sie in ihren eigenen Werken finden, und weit fester als in ihren eigenen Werken haben sie den Zielpunkt ihrer Gedanken vor Augen. Aber diese Gedanken sind dennoch niemals verändert, niemals verschönt und niemals verbildet. Sie sind das in der Form gereinigte, im Gehalte völlig getreue Nachbild des Originalentwerfers. Diese Kunst der Darstellung ist ebenso neu als notwendig. ... Wahrlich, wer die Entwicklung des theoretischen Geistes von Descartes' bis zu Kants großen Nachfolgern zum Objekt zu machen imstande war, der hat ein schöpferisches Werk vollbracht. ...“ (Preussische Jahrbücher.)



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